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Pertanika is an international peer-reviewed journal devoted to the publication of original papers, and it serves as a forum for practical approaches to improving quality in issues pertaining to tropical agriculture and its related fields. Pertanika began publication in 1978 as the Journal of Tropical Agricultural Science. In 1992, a decision was made to streamline Pertanika into three journals to meet the need for specialised journals in areas of study aligned with the interdisciplinary strengths of the university.

The revamped Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities (JSSH) aims to develop as a pioneer journal for the Social Sciences with a focus on emerging issues pertaining to the social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. Other Pertanika series include Pertanika Journal of Tropical Agricultural Science (JTAS); and Pertanika Journal of Science and Technology (JST).

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Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities
Vol. 23 (1) Mar. 2015

Contents

Foreword	i
<i>Nayan Deep S. Kanwal</i>	
Invited Article	
Life-Long Education for the Global Workforce in the Socio-Engineering Age	iii
<i>Namita Arora and Vijay K. Arora</i>	
Regular Articles	
Informal Learning in Malaysian Banks: Evidence and Scenarios	1
<i>Khoo, S. L.</i>	
The Parallel Quest for Identity in Hedayat's <i>The Blind Owl</i> and Faulkner's <i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	21
<i>Pedram Lalbakhsh and Pouria Torkamaneh</i>	
The Relationship between Personality Types and the Type of Correction in EFL Writing Skill	35
<i>Nasrin Shokrpour and Shadab Moslehi</i>	
Architectural Changes and Motivational Factors for Post-Earthquake House Transformation in Lar City, Iran	47
<i>Mohammad Parva, Kamariah Dola and Farzad Pour Rahimian</i>	
Conceptualising Malaysian Labour Law Syllabus Through Economic Analysis of Law: A Trans-disciplinary Approach	67
<i>Kamal Halili Hassan</i>	
Modelling Neighbourhood Satisfaction of Residents in High-And Medium-Density Neighbourhoods of Lagos City, Nigeria	85
<i>Stephen Enyinnaya Eluwa and Ho Chin Siong</i>	
Student Activism and The 13th Malaysian General Election: The Second Civil Society Wave After 1969	105
<i>Mohd. Fauzi B Fadzil and Ku Hasnita Ku Samsu</i>	
Students' Islamic Personality on Amanah: A Structural Modelling Approach	129
<i>Tekke, M., Ismail, Nik Ahmad Hisham, Adnan, M.A.M. and Othman, N.</i>	

An EFL On-line Writing: Exploring Its Gains <i>Luciana</i>	139
Factors Affecting the Employment of Arabic Language Learning Strategies Among Religious Secondary School Students <i>Kamarul, S. M. T</i>	155
Stress Among Thai Farm Workers Under Globalization: A Causal Model <i>Kaewanuchit, C., Muntaner, C., Labonte, R. and Johnson, D. A.</i>	169
Exploiting the Potential of Project-Based Instruction Benefiting from Authentic Atmosphere, Authentic Materials and Interactive Multimedia: An Attempt to Improve Students 'English Proficiency' <i>Agustina, L., Handoyo, F. and Budiprayitno, B.</i>	183
The Expectation and Satisfaction of the First Time and Return Tourists toward the Heritage Attractions in Melaka <i>Jamil Jusoh, Nor Fatimah Abd Hamid, Nurul 'Ulyani Mohd Najib</i>	195
Market-based Valuation Multiples: Evidence from Agribusiness Sector <i>Chin Fei Goh, Amran Rasli, Krzysztof Dziekonski and Saif-Ur-Rehman Khan</i>	209
EFL Learners' Selective Listening Ability: Cocktail Party Effect <i>Javad Hayatdavoudi</i>	223
Expressing Emotions in Words: <i>Facebook</i> Text-based Comments in Tamil <i>Malarvizhi Sinayah, Paramasivam Muthusamy, Kannan Narayanan and Normaliza bt Abd Rahim</i>	233
Journey through Nature and Self: The Melancholic Narrator in Atwood's <i>Surfacing</i> <i>Kamelia Talebian Sedehi and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya</i>	247
What Happens When Islamic Capital Markets Move Away From Tax Neutrality – A Look At Oman & Saudi Arabia <i>Selamat, A., Ariff, M. and Shamsher M.</i>	253

Foreword

Welcome to the **First Issue 2015** of the Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (JSSH)!

JSSH is an open-access journal for the Social Sciences and Humanities that is published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. It is independently owned and managed by the university and run on a non-profit basis for the benefit of the world-wide social science community.

This issue contains **16 articles**. The authors of these articles come from different countries, namely, **Malaysia, Iran, Indonesia and Thailand**.

The articles cover a wide range of topics: a study investigating the transformation process of post-earthquake houses in Iran, in particular, people's motivational factors for these transformations (*Mohammad Parva, Kamariah Dola, and Farzad Pour Rahimian*); a research that examined the factors influencing residents' satisfaction in high and medium density neighbourhoods of Lagos metropolitan city, Nigeria (*Eluwa, S. E and Ho, C. S*); an analysis on the expectation and satisfaction of tourists towards Heritage Attractions in Melaka (*Jusoh, Jamil., Abd Hamid, Nor Fatimah. and Mohd Najib, Nurul 'Ulyani*); a discussion on the role of the student movement in the 13th Malaysian General Election (*Mohd. Fauzi Fadzil and Ku Hasnita*); and an article that explains the concept of economic analysis of law in understanding labour law (*Kamal Halili Hassan*).

The research studies, on topics related to finance, literature, psychology, education and language and linguistics, include: a study that investigated the choice of multiples in valuing agribusiness firms in Malaysia from 2003 to 2009 (*Goh, C. F., Rasli, A., Dziekonski, K. and Khan, S. U. R.*); research evaluating how tax reforms affect stock prices of local and foreign firms in Oman and Saudi Arabia (*Aslam S., Ariff, M. and Shamsher M.*); an article attempting to trace the parallel search for identity in Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* (1937) and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) (*Pedram Lalbakhsh and Pouria Torkamaneh*); a paper that discusses how Margaret Atwood's melancholic female subject in *Surfacing* goes on a quest-journey in the wilderness to deal with her sense of loss and gains a new life (*Kamelia Talebian Sedehi and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya*); a study that explores the causal relationships between globalisation and stress of Thai farm workers (*Kaewanuchit, C., Muntaner, C., Labonte, R. and Johnson, D.*); an investigation of the factorial structure of the Ummatic Personality Inventory among students (*Tekke, M., Nik Ahmad Hisham, I., Adnan, M. A. M., and Nooraini, O.*); a study that illustrates the blurring boundaries between informal and formal learning in Malaysia's banking sector (*Khoo, S. L.*); a study investigating the relationship between two personality types, namely, extrovert vs. introvert, and two types of correction (self-correction and teacher correction) in an EFL writing context (*Nasrin Shokrpour and Shadab Moslehi*); a study that examined an EFL on-line writing programme with its automated feedback in terms of the students' writing

progress, the discrepancy between the on-line and teacher scores, and the teachers' and students' perceptions (*Luciana*); a study of the factors affecting the employment of Arabic language learning strategies among religious secondary school students (*Kamarul, S. M. T.*); research that explored the potential of a project-based instruction programme to improve students' English oral communication skills (*Lia A. , Futuh H., Bambang Bp.*); a study that examines the selective listening ability of a group of EFL learners (*Hayatdavoudi, J.*); and a study that discusses the techniques used in Tamil to convey emotions through words in Facebook (*Malarvizhi, S. and Paramasivam, M., Kannan Narayanan and Normaliza Abd Rahim*).

I anticipate that you will find the evidence presented in this issue to be intriguing, thought-provoking and useful in reaching new milestones. Please recommend the journal to your colleagues and students to make this endeavour meaningful.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all the contributors who have made this issue possible, as well as the authors, reviewers and editors for their professional contribution. Last but not least, the editorial assistance of the journal division staff is also fully appreciated.

JSSH is currently accepting manuscripts for upcoming issues based on original qualitative or quantitative research that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation.

Chief Executive Editor

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Invited Article

Life-Long Education for the Global Workforce in the Socio-Engineering Age

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ABSTRACT

Socio-engineering is a field built out of several disciplines, and could be said to be a synthesis of engineering, the humanities and the social sciences. Global leaders trained in the spirit of socio-engineering tend to be free-minded, and value life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all stakeholders, regardless of ethnic makeup, intellectual leanings or geographic location. Knowledge engineering is the art of infusing the liberal arts in the practice of diverse professions in order for the debate of issues with a view to solving problems often encountered in real life but not in textbooks. The focus of knowledge promulgation for the global economy is on the welfare of all organisational stakeholders through a sound social environment for effective human interaction in managing contemporary ideas and values. Stakeholder analysis for needs and outcomes requires a design, a plan for nurturing, change management and the understanding of behavioural and emotional traits. The outcome is expected to be a synthesis of text and context that takes into account the shifting paradigms in global practice and varying societal needs. Professionals so trained distinguish logic from tradition, tradition from prejudice, prejudice from common sense and common sense from nonsense.

Keywords: Socio-engineering; global economy; knowledge engineering; brain; mind; outcome-based education; stakeholder; behavioural engineering

INTRODUCTION

The word ‘engineering’ originates from the Latin ‘*ingenium*’ and ‘*ingeniare*’, from which also is derived the word ‘ingenuity’

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or ‘cleverness’; with regards to the field of engineering, the reference is to ingenuity in contrivance or design, and especially in relation to strategic planning. In fact, ‘engine’, a term derived from ‘engineering’, refers to a whole that drives a multitude of compartments by bring them into motion. The term ‘leader’ is an analogue of engine. Just as how an engine powers a set of compartments, a leader drives various departments in an organisation, putting power in the hands of stakeholders, creating e-motion and cultivating emotional intelligence. The followers, as stakeholders, will power the organisation with a win-win paradigm for all to feel rejuvenated in fulfilling the organisation’s mission, vision and values. It is no miracle that the process of engineering is the application of scientific, economic, social and practical knowledge in order to invent, design, build, maintain, research and improve policies, procedures, systems, structures, machines, devices and materials. It is an ongoing process of quality deployment and assessment of the products or outcomes. In search for total quality management, holistic thinking, management of resources and creating avenues for implementation of the emerged outcomes are of paramount importance. The goal is to embed higher-order life, professional and technical skills as a natural process of disciplinary education. Stakeholder analysis for needs and outcomes requires a design, a plan for nurturing, change management and understanding the behavioural and emotional traits. In this context, social sciences and humanities are interwoven in

continuing discourse as people and ideas merge to foster whole-brainthinking as a lifestyle i.e. from cradle to grave. Lifelong education and socio-engineering are buzz and biz words for the present century. These buzz words are expected to make human interactions thrive and unshackle the human mind from the slavery of old paradigms in this techno-savvy age.

Education is the process of becoming along the journey of achieving one’s goals, as expressed by Frederick W. Robertson: “Instruction ends in the school-room, but education ends only with life”. While formal training ends in college or university, education continues for life with lifelong education or continuing education as a worker continues her life journey through career development and enjoys life beyond retirement as a valuable resource for the community she lives in. That is why graduation ceremonies in the US are called “commencement”, signalling the beginning of a new journey into career and employment. Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another (as quoted by G. K. Chesterson). The humanities play a principal role as education is indispensable to the individual and society, for without it we would lose all the knowledge we have accumulated since the beginning of time. The social sciences lubricate the process of human interaction, providing strategies the individual to learn the culture of a society, the accepted ways of doing things and, above all, learning the process of change management to create a better future for Earth’s habitats. Behavioral

engineering allows the individual to socialise into the prevailing culture and learn the rules of conduct and expectations about future behaviour. Education of the 21st century must not only rest on a platform of cognizant teaching, it must also provide a milieu for self-learning and development, inculcating values and promulgating norms and social skills that will enable the individual to develop his personality and sustain the social system. Roth (2014) firmly asserts that college teaches young people to think and to engage, allowing them to better themselves and their societies. In his vision, “liberal education matters far beyond the university because it increases our capacity to understand the world, contribute to it, and reshape ourselves.”

The global workforce transcends boundaries of disciplines as well as those of nations, anytime, anywhere. It is meant to ensure that the workforce will be able to succeed in a world marked by interdependence, diversity and rapid change. Education of a global workforce provides knowledge and understanding of culture, language, geography and global perspectives. Most importantly, a global education enables students to understand their roles in a global community and teaches them how their actions can affect citizens throughout the world.

The key component of a knowledge economy is greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources (Powell & Snellman, 2004). Strategic planners in academia, government and industry focus heavily

on knowledge production in terms of patents and publications. Less attention is paid on outcomes that include knowledge dissemination and impact. While all organisations are interested in how many answers an individuals may have, we are even more interested in how they behave when they do not know—when they are confronted with life’s problems, the solutions to which are not immediately known. The larger goal is for enhanced performance under challenging conditions that demand strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity and craftsmanship to resolve complex problems.

The global economy is in transition to a knowledge-intensive economy as we come out of the psyche of being under the rule of the colonial British Raj, which depended largely on agricultural- and labour-intensive economies. In a knowledge economy, a significant part of a company’s value may consist of intangible assets such as the value of its workers’ knowledge (intellectual human capital), which is impossible to document in terms of financial wealth. The humanities and social sciences play a significant, pivotal role in defining the traits of a knowledge worker and are now integrated in desired educational outcomes as in the ABET portfolio (ABET, 2014) of the US Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Natural integration of these so-called liberal arts skills are now at the core of Washington Accord’s (WA’s) desired outcomes (Washington Accord, 2014) embraced by 17 participating countries (Arora & Arora, 2014).

In this global era that relies on interdependence between countries, trade blocks and organisations are evolving into multinational entities. There are the age-old challenges that every young person faces: securing a job, finding a life partner, finding one's justified place in the interconnected global economy etc. Now there also are new challenges to negotiate: global terror, nuclear proliferation, managing the downsides of the Internet, religious and cultural conflicts, climate change, to name a few. The challenges are both ideological and ecological; they share underlying similarities as they all deal with management of the planet's limited resources in the wake of unlimited human wants. In finding the optimal solution, we assess how humans relate to one another and how we choose to live our lives. There is a need for renaissance professionals who are able to integrate science, the humanities and management concepts (ABET, 2014). These changes require academia to design a goal-driven engineering process for budding professionals to solve any problem—technical or non-technical—as opposed to learning specific solutions to a specific set of problems. A knowledge-based quality organisation comprises professionals with diverse talents who identify the real problem, solve it effectively and efficiently, generate alternatives, evaluate possible outcomes, implement solution(s) and, above all, provide a framework for renewal (Covey, 1989) and ongoing improvement (Goldratt & Cox, 1992).

Today, more and more organisations, including universities, are waking up to newer demands and are haphazardly setting rules in response to realities just to survive, not thrive, in a highly competitive workplace. Cooperation among competitors is a new paradigm leading to educational blocks and the ability to cut across the boundaries of disciplines. The emerging facts from the successful organisations indicate that the real source of power in a knowledge-based economy is the *management of ideas* coming from diverse professionals. The only constant that traditions do not survive is change. The choice is stark: educate, innovate or evaporate. The innovation comes from seeking wisdom wherever it can be found (Arora, 2009; Arora & Faraone, 2003).

In an online survey (The Star, 2015) of about 300 respondents, the outcomes indicated in Fig.1 were anticipated, consistent with the survey by Steven Institute of Technology and State Higher Education Office SHEEO, discussed by Arora and Faraone (2003), as shown in Fig.2 (Koen, 2001; Van Horn, 1995). Deficiencies in ethics, listening, written and oral communications and responsibility and management were found. Employers' expectations in technical proficiency were exceeded. The ongoing practice of the humanities and social sciences as a natural component of disciplinary training plays a predominant role in filling knowledge gaps that exist between the current state of education and traits desired in a knowledge

economy. Care must be taken not to create more subjects in developing soft skills, but more emphasis on natural integration of these subjects with disciplinary specifications.

Global renaissance professionals do not need formal training in integration of science, technology, the social sciences, the humanities and management (Arora, 1998). They are self-learners who ask themselves and fellow planners insightful questions. A process of lifelong learning is always in

the minds of potential or seasoned global leaders. Our research indicates the following attributes of a global leader:

- Concerned with one-time, future-orientated tasks directed toward innovation and change
- Works under limited resources and unlimited human wants
- Makes a reasonable projection of end results under highly uncertain and

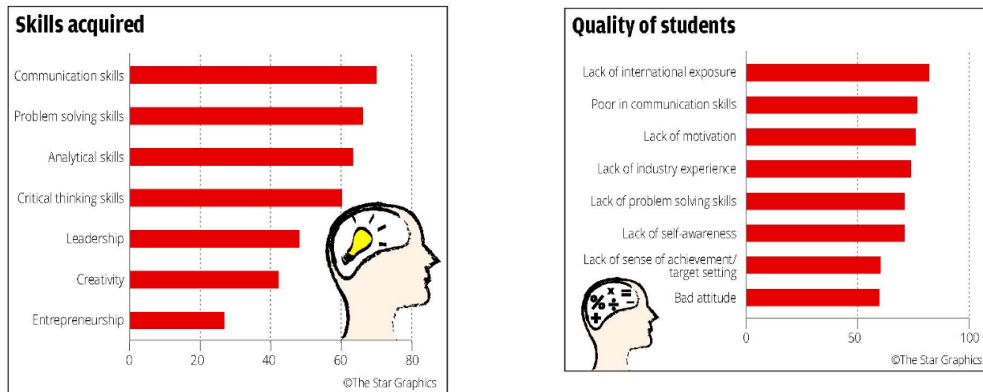


Fig.1: The results of a survey by The Star, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the skills desired in the workforce of tomorrow, as well as the lack of some desired attributes.

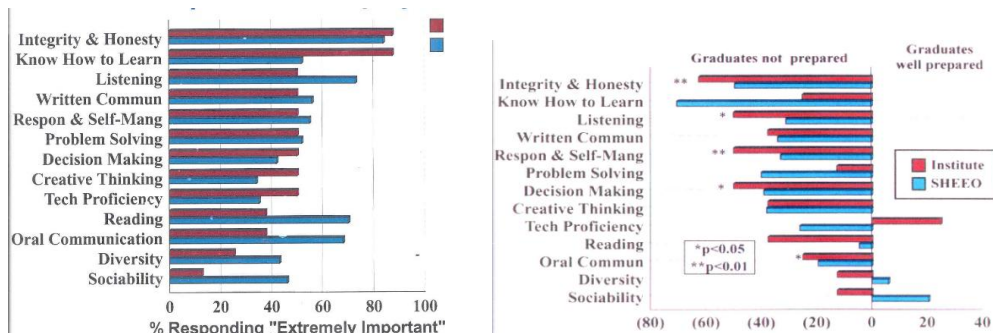


Fig.2: Attributes sought by the employer (left) and the existing gaps in the training of global leaders.

unpredictable environments of the future

- Deals with, motivates and controls highly trained, creative people, directing them and the organisation to success.

As a comparison, it may be worthwhile to examine the attributes of common workers:

- Concerned with present-orientated, periodic repetitive tasks
- Desired goal is strict adherence to predetermined policies, procedure and methods
- Deals with the enforcement of plans, schedules, policies and procedure where the results of decisions are much more predictable
- Can direct people who can take instructions

While the value of higher education in providing access to improved jobs, better earnings and career prospects is an important driving force for people to invest in higher education, these gaps show serious reforms are needed in not only creating desired outcomes, but also in creating a process of ongoing improvement through assessment practices. In an examination-orientated culture, a mark of colonial British education, nurturing and measurement of the desired attributes is a daunting task that can be designed with the ongoing process of quality control. British education has gone through dramatic transformation with the rise of the Washington Accord (2014),

of which Britain is a founding member. However, independent colonies it left behind are struggling to redefine themselves, especially those in Asia and Africa. One semester of study abroad or internships are being practiced in American universities to capture the essence of global education. That mindset of a global education requires cooperation from all stakeholders including parents, students, government planners, strategic thinkers, employers, employees etc.

The next section of this paper, provides the philosophical basis on which to plan research methodology that cannot be unique. Each constituency must assess the needs of the participants and act accordingly to achieve the desired outcomes. Several models of curriculum development are discussed. The paper then proceeds with outcome-based education (OBE) that brings out the need to address the desired outcomes in an educational milieu that are transferrable as knowledge travels with the speed of light through the Internet and other communication channels. The example of a Hong Kong university to embrace the OBE paradigm is stated and the importance of English as a language of instruction is accentuated for scientific, technological and management education, including the humanities and social sciences. Section *Behavioural and Social Engineering* considers the liberal arts that can be extended to embrace discipline specific outcomes. The example explored is the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programme initiated in the

US in response to embarrassing experiences faced by the US-educated workforce in international competitions. That itself demonstrates that the problems we face are global rather than local. When Wall Street in New York sneezes with its Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) going down, reverberations are felt throughout the globe. A couple of metaphors are mentioned to drive the point of perceptions as we assess our systems and achievements. Section *Tame the Mind, Create the Brain* brings out vividly the connection between attitudes (mind as a brain software) to create the brain as hardware so the underutilised/unutilised capacity of the brain may be capitalised on. Ned Hermann's model (Hermann, 1991) of the brain is one possible application of taming the mind to create a brain conducive to human development. However, it is not the only one. Other alternatives can be designed. Bloom's Taxonomy (Sosniak, 1994), which takes one from the lower level of memorisation to the higher level of transformation in acquiring and applying knowledge, has itself gone through transformation. The old version as stated below, extensively used by engineers, relies on knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, in the form of a pyramid. In fact, evaluation is the assessment. However, many as seen in the literature argue that to embrace all disciplines, the sequence must change to remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating. Our model relies heavily on propagation, engagement, discovery and synthesis

(PEDS). A knowledge bank with circling PEDS flattens Bloom's taxonomy. PEDS is an extension of Ernst Boyer's model of scholarship (Boyer, 2014) that is much more dynamic for adaptation. Section *Renewal and Ongoing Improvement* is on renewal to embrace change management as requirements of the global society change. Mind-body-soul integrated power to drive change is emphasised. The concluding Section *Concluding Remarks* is not a conclusion in the traditional sense but more of an advisory on how an individual can enhance the habit of the minds towards organisational goals and have a fulfilling personal and professional life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper is an amalgamation of ideas generated from the authors' experiences as implemented in the classroom and interaction with educators around the globe, including evaluation of the programmes. Catalano (1993) was the first to point out the stochastic nature of curriculum development which can have many models from which to construct the methodology of the delivery process. He made a comparison between a deterministic scientific paradigm and one that is chaos-based. His chosen alternatives are listed in Table 1. There appears to be consistency of the left brain (vertical) thinking with the traditional model of engineering education and in turn with a deterministic paradigm existing in educational institutions. Similarly, parallelism exists between right brain (lateral) thinking and a holistic curriculum

and the chaotic paradigm. With new advances in our understanding of the process of thinking, we are recognising the need to nurture both analytical (left-brain) thinking skills and creative (right-brain) skills, as shown in Table 1. Such is the paradigm presented in Section *Behavioural and Social Engineering*.

Fromm (2003) described the total engineering enterprise playing an unparalleled role in the American precepts of citizenry's "unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Whether those words are translated into the current terms of security, defense, health care, wealth production, entertainment or others, the foundation of that enterprise is its educational system. That system

provides the world with the creative talents of emerging professionals who will drive the economic engine for the betterment of society and enrich the human condition in the decades ahead.

Bordogna, Fromm and Ernst (1993) suggest a paradigm shift based on several reports and papers, revealing a common theme: engineering is an integrative process. In engineering the education of the future, it is no surprise that the process of integration is being sought by WA countries for all disciplines. The Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA), for example, accepts the methodology of the Board of Engineers Malaysia and is trying hard to embrace OBE to embrace all disciplines, to in fact propagate an intellectual culture. The roots

TABLE 1

Comparison and Contrast Among Models of Whole-brain Thinking, Traditional Versus Holistic and Deterministic Versus Stochastic

Whole Brain Thinking		Models of Engineering Curriculum		Scientific Paradigms	
Left Brain (Vertical)	Right Brain (Lateral)	Traditional	Holistic	Deterministic	Chaotic
Sequential	Holistic	Reductionist	Integrative	Reductionist	Integrative
Linear	Diffuse	Develop Order	Correlate Chaos	Linear	Non-Linear
Concrete	Symbolic	Engineering Science	Functional Core of Engineering	Discrete Data	Visual
Analytical	Intuitive	Analysis	Synthesis	Deductive Analysis	Intuitive Synthesis
Independent	Cooperative	Independence	Teamwork	Specialist	Interdisciplinary
Positive	Spontaneous	Solve Problems	Formulate Problems	Static Understanding	Dynamic Understanding
Explicit	Emotional	Research	Design	Explicit	Implicit/Trial & Error
Goal-Oriented	Process-Oriented	Techno-Scientific Base	Societal Context	End Points	Process
Verbal	Nonverbal	Understand Certainty	Handle Ambiguity	Certainty	Lack of Certainty
Numbers	Pattern	Abstract Learning	Experiential Learning	Algebra	Geometry
				Value Free	Value Laden

of contemporary collegiate education based on intellectual values should be shifted towards total integration after assessing the needs of a particular constituency. Bordogna et al. analysed current emphasis on reductionism vis-à-vis integration and recommended a holistic approach in which process and knowledge are woven throughout the curriculum, consistent with the holistic model of engineering education seen in Table 1.

A new construct for systemic change in education is designed in terms of taxonomy of intellectual components connected holistically with a core focus on developing human potential, as opposed to the present system in which students are passed serially through course filters. Based on the findings from the literature, the education of the future must be relevant, attractive and connected. Relevancy to the lives and career of students prepares them for a broad range of careers, as well as for lifelong learning involving both formal programmes and hands-on experience. Attractiveness keeps the potential workforce excited and rejuvenated. Intellectual content of disciplines must include contentment with life and its virtues as an individual advances in life's journey. Connectedness comes into play to address the needs and issues of the broader community through integrated activities with other parts of the educational system, industry and government. The outcomes are necessary to show the worthiness of public and private investments in academia.

The target question to answer in the concluding remarks is: How may we condition the habits of all stakeholders in an organisation, including the university as a knowledge company, so that ideas will converge with a win-win paradigm beneficial not only to the individual, but also to a community, the nation and the world at large? Minds conditioned in this way can design a curriculum or learning culture by researching desired outcomes that change with changing times.

OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION (OBE)

With the rise of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the focus is shifting from teacher to learner, from propagation of knowledge to the fraction received at the intended target, and from getting a piece of paper called a degree to values added to one's personal and professional profile. So is the challenge we are all facing in academia to answer the question: What values did we add to the student's creativity and innovation (C&I)? The cries of "Educate, Innovate or Evaporate," are being heard from all corners of the world (Arora, 2012) and all segments of global economy.

Research in propagation/promulgation of the acquired knowledge or intellectual property is being broadly discussed in every institution and in every organisation. To quote Theodore Von Kármán, Caltech's Provost during its formative years, "Scientists discover the world that exists; engineers create the world that never

was” (Testing Engineers and Consultants, 1966). In other words, science is about being driven by curiosity to understand the world. Engineering is about using science to transform the world. Engineering executes and business reports. An algorithm of this process allows one to find pathways in the uncharted territory of human thoughts by using a *compass*. Physical, biological and behavioural scientists study the world as it exists, for which *maps* exist and are readable. Engineers create the world that never existed for which *maps* are not yet produced, requiring a *compass* to guide the discovery process. During this discovery process of the unknowns of the future, knowledge and willingness to synthesise diverse disciplines are required. The interplay of our passions, our values and our conscience can be our compass. But the decisions we make cannot be driven by individual considerations alone. Not only will they be about our personal and professional life i.e. about family and career, they will also be about our life as citizens of our country as well as of the world.

Arora (2009) discussed managing resources in a nano era where nanotechnology is predominant. The creativity of the human brain was explored i.e. how it can be enhanced through whole-brain thinking. Arora and Faraone (2003) considered the process of being an entrepreneur. Many in academia believe technopreneurship, an amalgamation of technology and entrepreneurship, is the art of applying the liberal arts, the soul of the educated person. The Accreditation Board for Engineering

and Technology (ABET, 2014) lists the process of measuring outcomes for all engineering schools in the US. ABET is also a member of the Washington Accord (2014), a consortium of 17 countries that embraced OBE or Outcome-Based Education in 2014. The countries are: Australia, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong China, India, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. Social and behavioural aspects of engineering are naturally integrated in technical training of graduates in WA countries. These attributes now are being tried out in other disciplines as well. Arora (2009, 2013) lists these attributes to train tomorrow’s global leaders. In Arora’s vision of GC2020 (Global Criteria 2020) the graduates coming out of a four-year degree programme in a university must acquire:

- a. The ability to apply traditional liberal arts and behavioural sciences in a techno-savvy world
- b. The ability to design and conduct interviews, surveys or laboratory/field experiments as well as to analyse and interpret data from diverse sources
- c. The ability to design a system, component, process or multidisciplinary procedures to meet desired needs
- d. The ability to function on multidisciplinary teams
- e. The ability to function in multicultural and racially diverse environments

- f. The ability to identify, formulate and solve real-life problems with a service emphasis for assorted groups
- g. The ability to understand social, political, professional and ethical responsibility
- h. The ability to communicate effectively to racially, culturally and professionally diverse groups of people
- i. The broad education necessary to understand the impact of educated inference in a global and social context
- j. Recognition of the need for and the ability to engage in lifelong learning
- k. Knowledge of contemporary issues
- l. The ability to use the techniques, skills and modern information tools necessary for workplace practice

These attributes are not written on stone. They form a starting point for an educational entity (e.g. Ministry of Education of a country) to use as a template for constructing a constituency's slate of outcomes that can be mapped out of or into the design of courses, activities, internships etc. in general, building the knowledge ecology of an academic institution as a knowledge company. As a matrix is generated from where these outcomes come, the process of total quality management identifies the gaps that exist and a plan for ongoing improvements is created. Specialised disciplinary outcomes are added to the list to make a complete landscape. Recently, Hong Kong universities followed such an approach (Day, 2012). As a former

British territory entered the 21st century with liberation and accession to China, its government concluded that the education system it had inherited from the British was too rigid, narrow and elitist to produce such a workforce. After concentrating on one subject for three years, students graduated from university with a bachelor's degree but without being taught the knowledge and skills they might need to navigate the complexities of a modern, globalised society. In enacting the reforms, the Hong Kong government's principal goal was to improve education, but another goal was to make the territory into a preeminent higher-education hub in the South China region. English is the language of instruction. Hong Kong itself offers a vibrant, accessible mix of Chinese and Western cultures.

English is emerging as the global language especially for business and engineering. Countries that do not teach global subjects in English are falling behind in the academic landscape. Russia and Germany, especially, face that challenge. The reason is obvious: the industrial revolution started in Britain and with that, the English language was used to propagate the sciences and engineering and now, organisational behaviour through scientific (or engineering) management. Like it or not, we are stuck with English as the language of communication as information travels on the Internet, where impact-worthy journals are published in English, and lectures by prominent educators are broadcast over the media in the English language.

BEHAVIOURAL AND SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Behavioural engineering, an extension of the social sciences to embrace implementation, has its basis in the liberal arts. The liberal arts automatically embraced the fine arts and other cultural factors through the context in which they are practised. This was the mark of an educated professional in medieval times. No person was considered educated unless he was well-versed in the liberal arts. In a way OBE is the implementation of the liberal arts in modern context. In the light of a diversity of definitions of liberal arts, it is always a good idea to return to the basics. The *traditional* liberal arts consisted of two components:

- Quadrivium: Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music
- Trivium: Grammar, Rhetorics and Logic

A long time ago, we walked away from this concept of including the liberal arts for a well-rounded education. A new hybrid bringing together technology that embraces quadrivium, the modern liberal arts that embraces trivium and management principles that embrace the communication is developing. This integration of technical innovations with business practices is coined as ‘technopreneurship’ (or techno-entrepreneurship). Many believe that a goal-driven process of engineering with the goal of serving humanity—a synthesis of technology and entrepreneurship—is a new liberal art and hence anticipate the birth of behavioural or managerial engineering from the humanities and the social sciences.

Quadrivium based on physics as a foundation is the text of liberal arts. Trivium forms the context in which the liberal arts are practised. Text and context must be practiced simultaneously to derive synergy from social and behavioural interaction. Arithmetic, the basis of quantitative reasoning, is the language of physics. Geometry, an offshoot of Einstein’s space-time, is the basis of all sorts of graphics and visual displays. It is also the basis of right-brain thinking capturing the images of the holistic situation. Astronomy, a branch of physics, teaches us about the balance in the forces of nature that sustains life on the planet. Music is a collection of frequencies forming a transmitted signal that resonates with the receiver. Noise is considered dissonance. In communication channels, it is important to keep a high signal-to-noise ratio. To borrow an analogy from optical fibres, a signal must be replenished as it loses its communicative power in a human enterprise. Naturally, noise should be eliminated so signal-to-noise ratio is high, ideally infinity. Grammar or syntax forms the basis of a genre that can be discipline specific and is necessary to understand messages contained in a sentence or structure. Rhetorics, communication in written, oral or graphical form is meaningful for transmitted signals to propagate without much noise added. Logic forms the strong foundation of reasoning and allows us to organise our thoughts in a structured manner in a sentence, paragraph or document. A desired mantra while practising trivium as a context of quadrivium is: Say what you are going to say (or do), Say (or do) it,

and finally cap it by saying what you have said (or done). Chemists and biologists are reconditioning their thinking based on molecular dynamics using the principles of quantum physics (Arora, 2015). Similarly, good engineering is viewed as an integration of disparate ideas and resources (artificial and natural).

In a new format, popular in the minds of US strategic planners, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are replacing the traditional liberal arts in designing educational delivery in a competitive global marketplace. The American educational system designed the STEM delivery programme after receiving some sobering news from international competitions that its students were not able to reach a particular mark. Less wealthy nations like Estonia, Slovenia and Finland fared better. The workforce of tomorrow must have a competitive edge in a globalised, high-tech marketplace. The United States is a global leader through the genius and hard work of immigrant scientists, engineers and innovators. It has not ignored that valuable resource in learning from its failures. STEM still forms the stem or stalk of traditional liberal arts in connecting with the sciences and the humanities. STEM must be increasingly coordinated with total curriculum development where the ecology of an academic institution is based on OBE. Not every one of the desired traits can be assessed through examinations as the interconnected world is used to. Many of these traits naturally arise while students are soaked in the ecology of an institution.

Clinton (2006) was first to point out that family values play an important role in propagating STEM culture at the child level. Hillary Clinton's ideology that "it takes a village" to educate a child underscores the need to make all stakeholders participate in the education of the workforce of the future. In a bold new General Education Plus (GE+) experiment adopted at the University of Colorado (Lord, 2014), there was a bold determination not to dilute the undergraduate curriculum, rather to enrich it through integration. Educational pedagogy is integrated with the process of engineering, making STEM closer to the ideals of the liberal arts. Through a focused curriculum development process, STEM is planned as a design-based four-year general engineering sequence that retains the essentials of total integration, capped by an additional semester of student teaching in an urban high school.

Newton's laws of physics come in handy when using physics as a liberal art. The first law, the law of inertia, defines status quo. It also illustrates that a human being is fundamentally a peaceful person, and this can be discovered through the meditative process of staying close to oneself. The second law states that change is possible only when there is a motivational external force. That is where our ambitions come in to motivate us to change for good or bad because of external influences. The third law is interaction between two bodies. If one rubs someone's shoulders, one gets rubbed in the process. When one hates someone (action), one gets the reaction of hate.

Action and reaction are equal and opposite. Action is done by one entity and reaction by the other in a two-entity interaction. The meditative process teaches discovery of peace in us as we discover that by our very nature we are peaceful (inert) until external influences urge us to transform our behaviour and mode of thinking. Meditation rooms at US airports are now a common sight and help us understand that one is not a sinner as it encounters obstacles of security checks and alike. Things do happen externally for which a person may have no control, but actions, reactions and know-how of crisis management are.

Real world problems are complex and sometimes are solved by metaphors and analogies taken from other disciplines. Here is one metaphor. In the eastern environment, the blessings of a priest are needed to find an auspicious time to launch a venture. In the West, the blessings of a lawyer are needed to protect the intellectual property. Intellectual property is actually universal; it is spawned through generations and does not belong to one person. Imagine this scenario: in a Fukushima-type nuclear accident, a lawyer, a priest and an engineer are set to be beheaded. The lawyer's head is the first to be put on the block, and the guillotine lever is pulled. When the blade gets stuck before it reaches her neck, she is released and she walks away shouting that justice has been served. Then it is the priest's turn. The blade gets stuck again before it can slice off the priest's neck; he is released and he walks away praising a higher form of justice. As the engineer's head is placed

on the block, he cranes his neck to look up at the malfunctioning machine and yells at the executioner, "Stop! I think I see the problem." So, even in death an engineer is devoted to professionalism and ethics. Or, maybe he thinks of renewal while practising his profession. He anticipates vibrant life beyond death. That was 20th-century engineering where truth held the highest power. In the 21st century, many distractions hinder our ability to see the future. A courageous leader is investigative. She will climb the tallest tree in the jungle and shout, "Wrong jungle" even if she is expected to keep quiet if her team finds itself in the "wrong" jungle. Here, progress is reported in terms of mileage covered without any outcome or worse, with negative outcomes.

Another metaphor explains the problem of perception or misperception. A man is taking a walk in Central Park in New York. Suddenly, he sees a little girl being attacked by a pit bull. He runs over and starts fighting with the dog. He succeeds in killing the dog and saving the girl's life. A reporter who was watching the scene walks over and says, "You are a hero, tomorrow you can read it in all the newspapers: 'Brave New Yorker saves the life of a little girl.'"

The man says, "But I am not a New Yorker!"

The reporter answers, "Oh, then the morning newspapers will say 'Brave American saves the life of a little girl.'"

"But I am not an American!" says the man.

"Oh, what are you, then?"

The man says, "I am a Pakistani!"

The next day the newspaper reads, “Islamic extremist kills innocent American dog while a little girl watched in vain. Connections to terrorist networks are being explored.”

In the interconnected world brought together by the Internet, such incidents are becoming normal and show the extent of how social and behavioural processes are being engineered for good or bad by the very media which are dedicated to bringing news and current events to the public at large. We need not go too far. Remember the last four Presidential elections in the US after Clinton left office. The lack of professionalism of our leaders has affected the whole world economy. Hence, no global leader can stand tall and still on his or her own turf. The vibrations of his or her actions reverberate throughout the world at the speed of light because of information transfer.

TAME THE MIND, CREATE THE BRAIN

The Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) initiative is a consortium of more than 100 scientists, spearheaded by the US National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. It provides intellectual cross-pollination for the researchers involved. These scientists are determined to find answers to some of the most enduring mysteries of the human brain that rewires itself with healthy attitudes of the thinking mind with emotional intelligence. The three-pound lump of wrinkled tissue—the brain, with no moving parts, no joints or

valves—not only serves as the motherboard for all the body’s systems but is also the seat of our mind, our thoughts and our senses that we exist at all and are live persons with a soul or the soul of oneness residing in each of us. Human beings can harness the tremendous information processing capability of this three-quart-sized internal computer, estimated to have about 17 billion bytes of storage and astounding speed. The mind with healthy emotions and attitudes is the brain’s software. The mind can be tamed by soaking ourselves in creative environments and activating the hidden forces of the brain. Healthy mind-body connection has been propagated in a number of studies. This powerful knowledge-managing resource must be used in enhancement of creativity and innovation (C&I). Recent research has come to the realisation that the adult brain retains impressive powers of “neuroplasticity”—i.e. the ability to change its structure and function in response to experience (Time, 2007).

Fig.3 indicates the functional areas of the brain that process different forms of information. Neuroplasticity means that the brain is capable of learning new tricks to utilise the under-utilised capacity of a given area. It appears that Nature has embedded a circuit theory practised in electrical engineering in the head of a person that enables information to travel at startling speeds of the thinking mind as electrical energy. The mind (or attitudes) indeed is the software of the brain hardware that programmes it to meet certain outcomes and

perform certain functions. Mind or thinking processes energise the brain. That is why the BRAIN research initiative is at the top of the agenda of US strategic planners and funding agencies.

The Human Genome Project in the US is drawing a new map of the brain in order to identify underutilised areas. From research so far, more than 98% of similarity has been found in human beings. Our mind or attitudes create the brain that makes us different from others. The agony of the human mind is to focus on the 2% of differences, ignoring the 98% of similarities. There are uncharted territories that can be tapped for enhanced productivity in delivering personal and professional satisfaction. The brain rewires itself to learn new tricks and changes its structure and function even in old age. Multiple objectives are fulfilled in studying and understanding the information-processing capability of the human brain. The left half works with logic,

words, structures and analysis. In contrast, the right half works with emotions, pictures, whole entities, relationship among parts and synthesis. The left half is sequential and time-bound (masculine); the right is holistic and time-less (feminine). In Asian philosophy, these two aspects form the yin-yang (feminine-masculine) combination. No person can have whole-brain dominance. Whole-brain thinking in the workplace can be activated by diverse personnel forming a team. Here comes the need to engineer social behaviour of diverse people in an organisation.

As shown in Fig.4, most people are right-handed, and think and operate from the left half of the brain comprising Quadrant A and B. The dominance of Quadrant A indicates that indeed we are human machines who are achievement-orientated and performance-driven. A knowledge economy requires a strong foundation in right-brain thinking. A discipline trainer dominant in Quadrant A

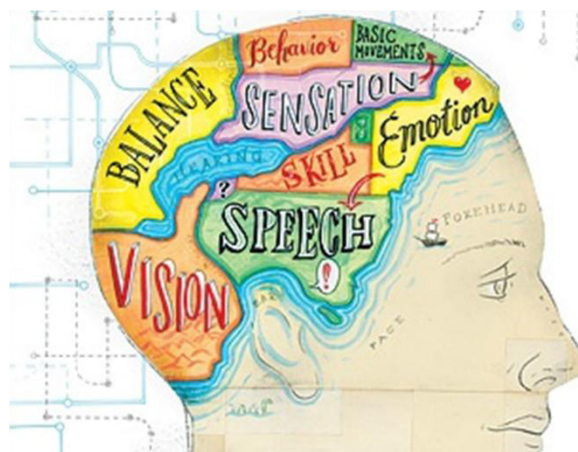


Fig.3: Processing capability of the human brain (Source: Time (2007))

must connect to Quadrant C where spiritual values reside. On the other hand, a manager dominant in Quadrant B must connect to Quadrant D to become a leader, innovator or entrepreneur. Bloom (Fig.5) noted that the education given by a university as a Knowledge Company keeps learners at the lowest level. However, to capture the hidden forces of the brain, as shown in

Fig.4, higher levels must be tapped. These higher levels can be commissioned through design of educational delivery resulting in assessment at the highest level to confirm that outcomes have been achieved. That is the spirit of the WA.

Arora (2009, 2012) went beyond Bloom's Taxonomy in defining a process that centres on the knowledge bank. Arora's

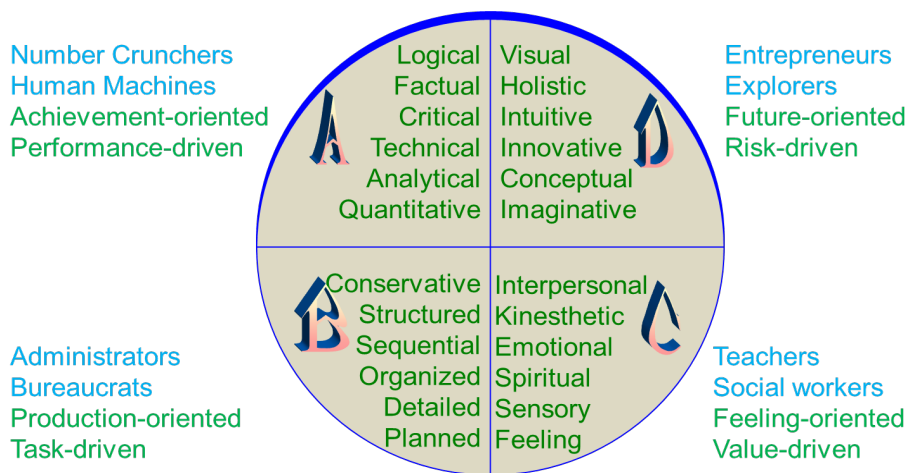


Fig.4: Ned Hermann's Creative Brain ranging from quadrant A on the left showing a lower level to the higher hierarchy quadrant D for creativity and innovation (C&I)

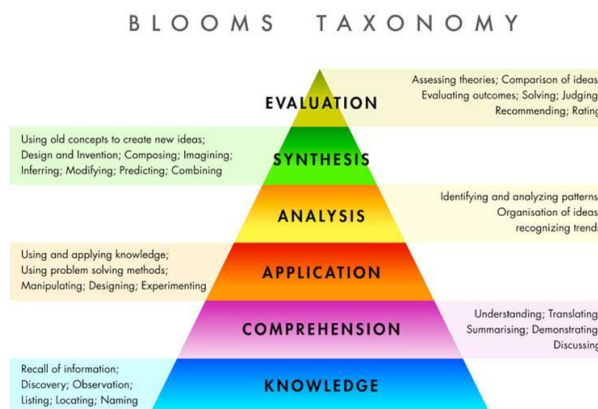


Fig.5: Hierarchy of learning by tapping the hidden forces of the human brain by moving to higher levels (Source: Internet)

model is more dynamic, as shown in Fig.6. Traditionally, academic leadership relied on a triad of duties and responsibilities—teaching, research and service—to assess the academic value of a faculty member to the university. The emphasis these days is on assessable desirable outcomes that students must possess on graduation that in turn will build a strong reputation for any university. The shift is from teacher-centred to student-centered (customer-focused) education with a view to assess not only the knowledge (learning) that has been promulgated but also what fraction (outcomes) has been received by the learners and implemented (objectives) in life beyond the walls of a university.

Arora's paradigm is based on the Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching's *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Boyer, 2014). In Arora's vision, the faculty portfolio is divided into four categories: defining, planning and inspiring intellectual development of the whole

person (promulgation or propagation of the acquired knowledge to replace teaching); the assistance, perspective and consultation provided to practitioners (engagement with professionals within and outside the university); the integration of knowledge across departmental and school boundaries and even university boundaries (synthesis); and basic and applied research (discovery). A planetary model of these four functions is shown in Fig.6.

Arora's planetary model of Fig.6 encompasses Bloom's Taxonomy. Knowledge, both contributions to and drawn down from the central knowledge bank is like the sun radiating light from exploding hydrogen bombs in its interior from a fusion process, the source of enlightenment in all forms. It forms the core of Arora's model and maps the lower-level of Bloom's pyramid and makes it dynamic. Comprehension, application and analysis can be mapped into dynamic engagement and discovery mode. Synthesis is common in both models, which

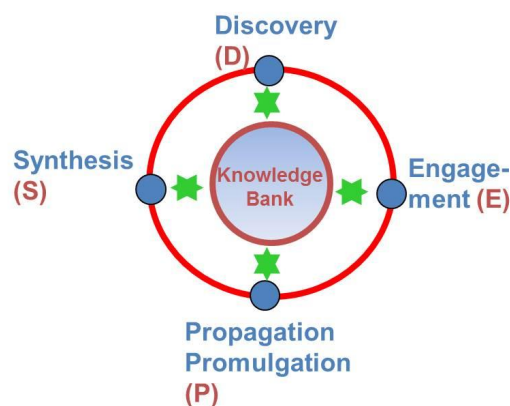


Fig.6: Priorities of the professorate to propagate a unified paradigm and learners to receive engaged training with discovery and integration naturally built within a curriculum

bring out vividly the engineering process of integration. Assessment (evaluation) is the natural process that keeps the activities in orbit and in dynamic state. In physics jargon, it is the centripetal (centre-seeking) force that keeps all PEDS activities in focus to craft a process of ongoing improvement (Goldratt & Cox, 1992). Arora's planetary model, therefore, is all encompassing from cradle to grave of a knowledge engineer as it shows the natural renewal process.

Considering the emerging socio-behavioral engineering age (Augustine, 1998), the need for effective and efficient integration or organisation of knowledge becomes more significant. The implementation of work modules as basic building blocks to achieve the curricular objectives has merits, but requires an interface to achieve its full potential as PEDS: promulgation or propagation of the acquired knowledge; engagement through knowledge management; knowledge discovery or creation; and synthesis of knowledge across departmental and school boundaries and even university boundaries.

Mentoring of students and research associates is an effective medium for the

synthesising of various functions of guru-scholar-technopreneur. The development of higher cognitive skills that enable students to be independent learners and independent problem-solvers who know how to utilise their knowledge is an important goal of lifelong education with enduring impact throughout one's professional career and perhaps beyond retirement age. Left to their own devices, trainees will do what is easiest for them, which is to use their own learning style. It will take them less time, but it will not enhance skills in their weaker areas. Table 2 presents an assessment model based on PEDS. The priorities of the professorate at entry level must originate with discovery mode as the highest priority moving on to engagement mode as a person advances along the professorate hierarchy. There is an assumption that all other functions are established by the time a professorate achieves the ultimate rank or is promoted to a leadership position. The numerical score is the weight on each activity with a total of 10. For example, at the entry level, 40% emphasis should be on D (discovery) mode.

Similarly, when students are engaged in the knowledge delivery process, the work

TABLE 2

Changing Priorities of the Professorate Higher Up the Hierarchy Forming a Pyramid Structure Where the Leader Forms the Apex of the Pyramid

	P	E	D	S
Entry	3	2	4	1
Assoc.	4	1	3	2
Prof.	1	3	2	4
Chair	1	3	2	4
Dean	1	4	2	3
Admin	2	4	3	1

modules should be designed so that they are able to integrate all four PEDS functions by social interaction and in forming dynamic teams for learning enhancement.

RENEWAL AND ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

Augustine (1998) has defined the 21st Century as the Socio-engineering Age. As stated earlier, engineering is not a discipline, rather a process of integration. Goldratt (1992) lays out a process of identifying bottlenecks to enhance productivity following a system approach. An organisation cannot override the capacity of a bottleneck. Therefore, to enhance the output, the capacity of the bottleneck must be elevated for smooth supply-chain management. Adams (1996) portrays bottlenecks in a humorous manner through cartoons. In his portrayal of *Dilbert Principle*, he advocates: “The most ineffective workers are systematically moved to the place where they can do the least damage: management. Of course, this creates maximum damage, as their idiocy permeates corporate life. It seems as if we have turned nature’s rules upside down. We systematically identify and promote people who have the least skills.”

In Indian mythology, the Brahama-Vishnu-Shiva trinity is invoked in discovery of divine forces in the ‘person within a person’. It is in the person within each of us, sometimes called the soul, where infinite potential resides. Covey lists three habits to create a Brahama the Creator in oneself by having private victories through gaining independence. Habit 1 (Be

Proactive) is about taking responsibility for one’s life. Habit 2 (Begin with the End in Mind) is based on imagination—the ability to envision in our mind what we cannot at present see with our eyes. It is goal driven, requiring an engineering process to move backward to find resources to meet the ends. Habit 3 (Put First Things First) is about prioritising. It is about our life management as well—our purpose, values, roles and priorities. The next three habits create Vishnu the preserver by moving from independence to interdependence. These three habits create the public victories and establish connections with the world at large. It is interdependence that is highly valued in a networked global economy where information travels at the speed of light. Habit 4 (Think Win-Win) sees life as a cooperative arena, not a competitive one. It is not zero-sum game demanding “I win, you lose;” or if you win, I lose. In a cooperative arrangement of resource sharing (covalent bonding in the language of chemistry), we make a community where everyone enjoys resources equally well. Habit 5 (Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood) is about enhancement of our listening skills. Listening is not hearing. Hearing is instantaneous with no permanent retention. Listening is about signal processing that gets embedded in our head, creating mindfulness. Habit 6 (Synergise) is making 1 and 1 equal 11 (not 2 or sometimes 1/2). It is about forming effective and efficient teams with open-mindedness embedded with the adventure of finding new solutions to old problems,

putting new wine in an old bottle and relabelling. The seventh habit of renewal is realisation as Shiva, the destroyer of ignorance, within oneself so transformation/renewal is a natural process. It is about “Sharpening the Saw” that re-shapes the expression of the self. It encompasses physical, social/emotional, mental and spiritual forces. Covey has recently added an 8th habit that is another form of renewal as stated in *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001). It is in effect a renewal to thrive, innovate, excel and lead in the new reality. The goal is to march towards fulfilment, contribution and greatness beyond being efficient (rate of production) and effective (long-term retention).

The higher education system is undergoing dramatic changes due to many underlying factors, particularly technology innovation, emergence of knowledge economy, shifting demographics and globalisation. It is important for us to review the best practices that will bring out the necessary outcomes desired of the 21st century workforce. Taming the mind with correct attitudes to create a collective brain of the combined workforce for a knowledge organisation will become essential in the years to come.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the Socio-engineering Age, which embraces nano culture, innovations are being discovered to enhance creativity in synthesising man-made artificial forces and ever existing natural divine forces. Managing resources by engineering the

social and behavioural patterns, as advocated above, are a must to derive synergy from a well-integrated training system both in and out of academia. As natural (God-made) and artificial (man-made) forces are understood and synthesised, there will be even greater need for a programmed approach while solving problems in the natural habitat of an organisation, whether in Asia, Europe, USA or anywhere else in the free world. In the search for an integrative process, the following resolutions for personal and professional attainment of all stakeholders are recommended:

- While planning for success, each one should consider oneself a contributing member of a larger enterprise. Our success is driven by how we talk, look, write, listen, create ideas, solve problems, motivate, persuade, lead, organise, handle anger and sleaze, and deal with power figures and outside organisations. In this capacity, we will be connoisseurs of talents, more curators than creators. Add motive and determination to achieve a goal and all stakeholders will progress towards that goal.
- Each stakeholder must have a sense of gratitude towards fellow workers. It is gratitude that transforms to a great attitude that reaches great altitudes in search of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Success is getting what you like, but happiness is liking what you get and being grateful for it. Mind-body-soul integration through expression of gratitude takes our attitudes to great

heights in appreciating the meaning and enjoyment of life forces. With gratitude, we can switch perceptions from problem to opportunity, from resistance to acceptance, from ending to beginning, from sickness to healing, from anger to forgiveness. Once we put gratitude into motion, we ignite energy in motion (e-motion or emotion), thereby turning thoughts into motion that spurs the brain to take right actions: Train your mind, create your brain. Habitually grateful people have more energy, optimism, social connections and happiness. Gratitude means counting our blessings, being thankful and acknowledging everything that we receive is by the grace of those around us. It is living our life as if everything were a miracle, being aware persistently of how we have been blessed by others. Gratitude shifts our focus from what our life lacks to the richness that is already present. We must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. In the trinity advocated by Arora (Arora, 2015) living what one preaches includes: Buddham Bhav (Be an enlightened wise person); Dharmam Char (follow the path of righteousness); Yogastha Kuru Karmani (establish yourself in total integration of mind-body-soul to perform an action, in fact any action and manage reaction).

- Each stakeholder must resolve to get out of his/her cubicle by communicating effectively with people that may or may not think or operate in similar manner

as another stakeholder might. Each one must realise that human nature is such that silence is deafening and curiosity overwhelming. The silence of a person is an indication that he or she is shaken psychologically and emotionally for a variety of reasons. A courageous leader will ignite curiosity in a silent colleague who is identified as not participating with enough enthusiasm. It is like creating resonant behaviour by matching the “frequency” of the driver (leader) with the driven (follower).

- Each stakeholder will keep on reminding him/herself about what is important in engineering his/her future and of those in his/her circle of influence. Not only will he/she produce quality attributes among generic “customers,” he/she will also create a quality educational organisation by relating to his/her colleagues and by forming effective and efficient teams. As a member of a team, a stakeholder will remain an intimate ally to his/her colleagues and peers alike. He/she may not have the loudest voices but he/she will have the most attentive ears. The ingredients are a combination of her competence, commitment, caring, fairness, candour and generosity.
- Each stakeholder will harness the tremendous information processing capability of their own three-pound three-quart-sized internal computer—the brain, estimated to have about 17 billion bytes of storage and operating 100 times faster than a real computer.

He/she will not waste this powerful knowledge managing resource for self-cancellation of his/her own endeavours with his/her own selfish motives. He/she will enhance the creativity of this nature-given resource with engineered patterns and processes to give his/her stakeholders what they need to succeed and live a meaningful life. Each one will use mind-power software to tame the mind to create the brain hardware for all in his/her circle of influence.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but to demonstrate the fact that we are not working or staying in isolation in this interconnected global economy. We must learn synthesis not only with disciplinary diversity, but also with the world's diversity in all its forms (Tobias, 1994). All stakeholders must work together, collectively staying synchronous to the value, virtues and needs of various segments of the global economy. Knowledge is an important ingredient to possess what can be converted into products or services as conditions and times change for the human enterprise to respond in a fast changing world, promoting people-to-people projects for happiness and contentment. Conversion is the key that converts knowledge in engineering the pathways for human enterprises.

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Informal Learning in Malaysian Banks: Evidence and Scenarios

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ABSTRACT

As countries modernise and ascend their development trajectories, their focus often shifts from informal to more formalised forms of education/training. Substantial portions of a nation's GDP are budgeted towards the formalisation and universalisation of education whilst informal education slips out of the foreground. However, in the New Economy where the volatile global environment has reorganised production methods and necessitated new/changing skills requirements, a paradigm shift in education, learning and training has occurred. In the New Economy, the boundaries between informal and formal learning have collapsed and become blurred as they co-exist to supplement and complement each other in the learning process. Against this backdrop, this paper illustrates the blurring boundaries between informal and formal learning in Malaysia's key services sector, banking. This study administered a qualitative research method. A purposeful sampling method was used to interview employees in 12 branches located in the two study sites (i.e. Kuala Lumpur and Georgetown) identified for this research. In showcasing the dynamics of 'formalising the informal' ways of learning, this paper contends that the re-emergence of informal learning is critical to fill the gaps and inadequacies of the formal education system.

Keywords: Informal learning, banking, Malaysia, New Economy

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INTRODUCTION

As countries modernise and progress along their development trajectories, their emphasis often shifts from 'informal' to more 'formalised' forms of education and training. To this end, governments have invested and budgeted substantial portions of their GDPs towards the

formalisation and universalisation of education as informal education gradually slips out of the foreground. However, in the New Economy where a volatile global environment has reorganised methods of production, a paradigm shift in education, learning and training has occurred. Learning can no longer be confined to ‘formalised environments’ oftentimes stereotyped through physical and tangible infrastructures (i.e. schools, classrooms etc.) or through ‘formalised channels/media’ imparted by formal educators like teachers/lecturers. Inevitably, global forces such as information technology and liberalisation of economies have reshaped methods of production, necessitated new/ changing skills requirements and in turn, these have challenged the relevance of existing formalised curriculums in the formal education system. The inability of the formal education system to restructure in tandem with global changes has received burgeoning criticism from scholars and political leaders alike (Brown *et al.*, 1997; Brown, 2001). This issue has triggered a dire need for the revisiting and renegotiation of the role and function of ‘informal learning’ in mainstream society (see also Palmer, 2009). Informal learning differs from formal ways of learning where informal learning methods involve learning in a less formalised and unofficial surrounding with an unstructured syllabus. It can happen in the presence or absence of an instructor. In certain occasions, informal learning occurs in an incidental manner by chance or without any particular intention. No longer

a component that can be side-stepped, the role and function of ‘informal learning’ has to be recognised, reinstated and reintegrated into mainstream learning considering that the boundaries between formal and informal learning have collapsed and become vague in today’s New Economy. In the New Economy, neither ‘formal’ nor ‘informal learning’ is more superior to the other as these two components co-exist, supplementing and complementing each other in the modern learning process. In the case of the service and knowledge industries specifically, the importance of both formal and informal learning as a symbiotic process has been widely researched in advanced economies with the banking industry as a case study (Harper & Rouncefield, 2000; Kitay, 2001; Finegold & Wagner, 2002). With Malaysia’s banking industry rapidly integrating into the global economy, it is pivotal to explore the learning processes in Malaysian banks as a way to observe convergence (or divergence) in learning methods and approaches.

Against this backdrop, this paper raises the following research questions: Do Malaysian banks adopt informal learning methods to develop their human talent? How is informal learning promoted amongst bank employees in Malaysian banks? To answer these questions, this paper illustrates how ‘informal learning’ has been developed as a viable option and strategy to fill the learning gaps and training needs of Malaysian bank employees as Malaysia’s banking industry liberalises and integrates into the global economy. It is also pertinent to mention at

the outset that this paper is not theoretical in nature. As qualitative research, the guide to the inquiry is based on key concepts and findings from previous research and case studies as will be reviewed in the coming section on informal learning in banking. As aforementioned in the research questions, this paper aims to explore and understand the existence/prevalence of informal learning in Malaysia banks. This paper is divided into four main sections. The section after the introduction reviews the relevant literature on the emerging importance of informal learning and includes some examples of informal learning found in today's world of banking. This section also briefly outlines the research methodology for this study. Section three discusses the results and the final section concludes this paper and suggests pragmatic policy implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Formal versus Informal Learning

In his seminal book *Human Capital*, Gary Becker (Nobel prize winner in Economics) contends that one of the ways to stimulate growth in a nation is to enhance its human capital. According to Becker (1993), this can be achieved by investing substantively in two main components of human capital, namely, education and training. To this end, most nations have strategised to invest and develop their formal education system in the hope of expanding and universalising education to the general masses. However, this focus on formal education is not sustainable. In the New Economy, the

constant demands for new/changing skills requirements have redefined the role and played down the importance of formal learning. As McGuire and Gubbins (2010) argue, "formal learning now plays a greatly diminished role, being supplanted by activity-based and technologically-based learning." A more scathing critique against formal learning was launched by Jay Cross, author of *Informal Learning: Rediscovering the Natural Pathways that Inspire Innovation and Performance*. The following quote succinctly summarises Cross' (2007) views on the waning role of formal learning:

Training professionals are paying attention to informal learning because formal learning has run out of steam. Things happen so rapidly in business today that new products roll out faster than traditional courses can keep up with. Workers don't have time for the inefficiencies of old-style training. For years, we're talked about giving people what they need, when they need it. The Internet makes it feasible to deliver on that promise. Formal learning did the trick for training factory workers how to follow procedures. Knowledge workers need to be co-participants in learning, not simply receivers.¹

Arguably and inevitably, informal learning, a perceivably 'inferior' and often sidelined channel of learning, has been given a new lease of life as the pervasiveness of globalisation impacts

¹This quotation was extracted from an online article entitled 'Informal learning: Extending the impact of enterprise ideas and information', http://www.adobe.com/resources/elearning/pdfs/informal_learning.pdf, April 19, 2011. (NOTE: There are no page numbers in the article.)

on the way we work and the new types of skills we need (Marsick *et al.*, 1999). The renaissance of informal learning is eloquently articulated by Coffield (2000) who stated that informal learning should not be regarded as inferior, substandard and pale in the shadows of formal learning. On the contrary, informal learning should be given a new lease of life and accorded its own right to be fundamental, vital and necessary in modern day learning processes. This thought-provoking and high-impact depiction of informal learning appeared in the introductory section of an ‘informal learning homepage’ as an attempt to evoke the thoughts of readers with regards to the rise of informal learning.² But before I delve deeper into the literature, it is important to have a common understanding of what ‘informal learning’ actually means. In the scholarly circle, much has been written and debated on the concept of informal learning (McGuire *et al.*, 2010; Wagner, 2007; Marsick *et al.*, 1999; Hager, 1998). For this study, I engage the term used by Eraut (2004, p.247) to define informal learning as follows:

The term ‘informal learning’ has been used increasingly in adult education for several reasons. It provides a simple contrast to formal learning or training that suggests greater flexibility or freedom for learners. It recognizes the social significance of learning from other people, but implies greater scope for individual agency than socialization. It draws attention to the

learning that takes place in the spaces surrounding activities and events with a more overt formal purpose, and takes place in a much wider variety of settings than formal education or training. It can also be considered as a complementary partner to learning from experience, which is usually construed more in terms of personal than interpersonal learning.

Two other components that differentiate between formal and informal learning are ‘structure of learning’ and ‘control’. As stated by Marsick and Watkins (1990) (cited in McGuire *et al.*, 2010), formal learning is generally “institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structure” whilst informal learning comprises “[incidental] learning, [which] may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured.” Incidental learning, in this case, can happen unintentionally or by chance. Most interesting of all, Marsick and Watkins (1990) highlighted that ‘control’ of informal learning lies exclusively in the hands of the learner, not the educator. In line with the above quote by Cross (2007), knowledge workers in today’s New Economy are no longer on the receiving end of the learning continuum. Instead, the volatile global environment has imposed upon knowledge workers to be ‘co-participants’ and contributors in the learning process. The next section will review how learning needs and outcomes are forcibly changing in response to global demands heralding the rise of informal learning in today’s world of Universal Banking.

²Retrieved from the ‘informal learning @ the informal education homepage’, <http://www.infed.org/biblio/inf-lrn.htm>, April 19, 2011.

GLOBAL BANKING RESTRUCTURING: AN OVERVIEW

The forces of the New Economy (i.e. deregulation, technology, changing consumption patterns) have radically reorganised banking work towards Universal Banking (CEDEFOP 2003: 99; Harper *et al.*, 2000). Traditional banking allowed the sales and provision of limited banking services. In contrast, Universal Banking emerged following the homogenisation and blurring of boundaries between different financial institutions, which subsequently allows the production and sales of ‘hybrid’ financial products that bear the attributes of banking, investment and insurance. This in turn intensifies competition between banks and non-bank institutions (Harper *et al.* 2003). As one of the industries that first adopted automation/computerisation, the introduction of complete ‘customer-profile databases’ in the banking industry has impacted the work of every employee especially at bank branches. This database enables storage of complete, up-to-date and ‘unified’ records of all business dealings with their customers. In restructuring banking operations, studies showed that the purported advantages of the updated ‘customer-relationship profiles’ are: 1) an increase in the functions of ‘self-service’ facilities; 2) better service to customers; 3) ‘cross-selling’ of financial goods; 4) analysis of profit; 5) retention of customers; 6) ‘marketing’; 7) a benchmark for the performance of a branch (Orlow, 1996; Pollard, 1995). Consequently, bank branches are transformed into strategic business units/

sales outlets. Clearly, the job tasks of tellers, officers and even branch managers are now more inclined towards sales where there is a need for them to possess up-to-date knowledge of the latest products and market changes, without which their banks will lag behind and lose competitiveness.

Banking Restructuring In Malaysia

In Malaysia, a radical change in the modus operandi of banks happened following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. Similar to global trends, financial liberalisation/deregulation is gradually permeating into the Malaysian scenario heralding the rise of Universal Banking. These changes resulted in amendment to the BAFIA (1989) in 2003 and subsequently the development of an integrated commercial bank and finance company (or BAFIN) framework (BNM 2005). On 15 January, 2004, this amendment was enforced permitting ‘the merger of commercial bank and finance company within a domestic banking group into a single legal entity’, whereby this new single entity is allowed to hold dual licences to undertake both businesses in banking and finance companies (BNM 2005). Subsequently, these macro changes were translated at the branch level heralding the rise of Universal Banking where Malaysian bank branches are converted to become ‘one-stop financial supermarkets’ that offer an array of financial products to meet diverse consumer needs and to serve Malaysia’s rising middle class who are more affluent, educated and sophisticated in their demands (Smith *et al.*, 2004). These

radical transformations inevitably pose a need for more knowledgeable Malaysian bank employees and, subsequently, for more responsive and proactive forms of learning at the workplace. A review of banking literature shows that banks are strategising towards informal learning to fill their learning gaps. The following strategies are by no means exhaustive.

Informal Learning in Banking

Strategy 1: Bank as a ‘learning organization’. In line with the rise of a ‘learning society’ (Crouch *et al.*, 1999), banks are synonymously adopting this concept by transforming to be ‘learning organisations.’ Banks are capitalising on informal learning to achieve this means. According to Powell (2005), workplaces that encourage continual ‘lifelong learning’ are amongst strategies that are most ‘effective and efficient’ in developing workforce skills. This notion is supported by banking studies in Denmark (Illeris, 2002) and the United Kingdom (Watkins, 1998). In Australia, empirical studies have concluded that Australia’s Westpac Bank is a ‘learning organisation’ too (Kitay, 2001). Westpac recognises the need to align its learning agenda with the bank’s overall strategic plan. The bank has capitalised on technological innovations to transform Westpac into a learning organisation. Westpac developed an ‘e-enabled company’ for employees to learn informally where ‘training modules’ are readily available on CD-ROM or online. Employees are even financially aided to purchase computers so

they can learn privately instead of during working hours on the bank’s time.

In response to the ‘sales culture’, Westpac’s training for induction increased from a few days (in the early to mid 1990s) to two weeks before tellers and customer service representatives were left to handle customers. Newly recruited employees were ‘buddied’ with senior staff to get exposure and relevant on-the-job training. Westpac senior managers adopt a committed leadership role too. To steer the organisation towards a learning environment, a ‘learning board’ is established where senior members of the bank act as role models. At middle management level, ample learning opportunities are given to Westpac staff to ‘develop’.

In sum, Westpac views ‘learning’ as an ‘investment and not a cost’ where employees are valued ‘equally and highly’. Kitay (2001) also confirmed that Westpac is a ‘high performance workplace’ that emphasises ‘market-valued core competencies’. The following strategy, apprenticeship, is another example of informal learning at the workplace. The next section illustrates how German banks acknowledge the importance of (informal) learning in ‘real work settings’.

Strategy 2: Apprenticeship and Skills Formation. In German financial services, skills formation relies heavily on the ‘dual system’ where an employee will usually be hired upon completion of a ‘company-based apprenticeship programme’. This neo-corporatist approach (Ashton *et al.*, 1996) to skills formation is a collective effort

among various stakeholders: firms, the State (Lander) and the federal government that provides classroom and on-the-job training with extensive 'job rotation' (see Bertrand *et al.*, 1988).

Empirical evidence from German banks illustrates the importance and relevance of apprenticeship in developing transferable skills. This model discloses that German bank employers invest heavily in 'transferable skills' as opposed to human capital theories that suggest otherwise. Further evidence shows that German banks prefer to hire employees with apprenticeship qualifications than new graduates (Jentjens, 1997) (cited in Finegold *et al.*, 2002). In order to retain the best apprentices, big German banks offer internal programmes for training and career advancement that include internal promotion, taking specified 'in-house' exams and related external courses. Some German banks even provide four-year management trainee programmes (Förderprogramme), which includes two years of job rotation and another two years of job specialisation. Additionally, certain German banks also offer 'part-time degree or degree-equivalent qualifications' to apprentices without the need for them to leave the organisation. Albeit there are critiques on the relevance of apprenticeship in the New Economy, proponents advocate the superiority of this model due to its 'experiential learning in real work setting' (Haipeter *et al.*, 2005). In sum, German banks continue to view apprenticeship, and the intensive instruction it offers in 'real work settings' as the best way to develop the

skills required in the New Economy. This perception prevails not only in established, traditional firms but also in new-firm entrants (i.e. direct electronic banks, foreign banks) that have become participants in the dual system for training young people for highly-skilled positions (Finegold *et al.*, 2002).

At the Malaysian front, however, research related to training and development is scarce. Most Malaysian scholars are interested in research associated to banking service quality on customer loyalty (Lo, Mahamad, Ramayah, & Mosahab, 2010) as well as E-service quality and adoption of Internet banking (Raman, Stephenaus, Alam, & Kuppusamy, 2008; Munusamy, De Run, Chelliah, & Annamalah, 2012). Whilst there are also scholars who explored the financial competitiveness, growth and performance of Malaysia banks (Bahreini & Mat Zain, 2013; Ong & Gan, 2013), research on human capital development especially that related to informal learning is largely absent. Thus, this study is timely and endeavours to fill this large research gap. Before showcasing the types of informal learning in Malaysia's banking industry, the following section will briefly outline the research methodology for this study.

METHODS

Given the constraint of space, there will be little attempt to discuss in-depth the complete method of data collection and analysis used for this study. Nonetheless, the remainder of this section will illustrate in brief the research design for this study.

In keeping with qualitative research methods, a 'purposive sampling strategy' was administered to select the study sites, case study banks and respondents for this study. The study sites, Kuala Lumpur and Georgetown, were selected given their roles as financial centres of their respective states. Two prominent Malaysian banks were identified to be case study banks (CSBs) with 12 bank branches (six from each bank) selected to be investigated. Broadly, there are three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental and collective, which are administered differently (Stake 2003: 136-8). In this context, the 'multiple' or 'collective case study' research design is suitable and was used for this study. This approach compares, contrasts and analyses the commonalities and diversities of the two domestic banks under examination. Additionally, the goal of this study was exploratory in nature. This study attempted to explore the extent to which informal learning methods are adopted to develop human talent in Malaysian banks.

In order to gain holistic descriptions of informal learning of branches in different locations, a stratified sampling was used to identify branches situated not only in urban areas (i.e. Kuala Lumpur Main, Bukit Bintang, Penang Main, Jalan Tun Perak, Menara Ban Hin Lee, Pulau Tikus), but those sprawled in suburbs (i.e. Petaling Jaya Seapark, Jelutong, The Curve, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, Jalan Mahsuri) as well as villages (i.e. Balik Pulau) too. Data collection involved both primary and secondary data collection techniques and various 'sources

of evidence' (Yin 2003a: 83). Primary data collection techniques entailed interviews (i.e. in-depth discussion, semi-structured discussion, focus group discussion, informal discussion), direct observation, documents and archival records. Secondary data collection involved extensive literature review of previous studies and selected banking literature.

To explore the prevalence and importance of 'informal learning' in Malaysian bank branches, this study endeavoured to interview bank employees located at both headquarters and branch networks. It was interesting to find out that varying forms/channels of informal learning were adopted by the 12 bank branches despite coming under the same umbrella of two larger banks. It can be concluded that different bank branches have different modes of informal learning. Based on a stakeholders' analysis, primary data were collected and triangulated among four categories of bank employees namely senior/middle managers (12 persons), branch managers (12 persons), branch officers/executives (28 persons) and frontliners (16 persons). A total of 68 branch employees were interviewed in this study. All 68 of these employees were interviewed through in-depth discussions and some of the frontliners were invited to participate in focus group discussions. These employees were interviewed only once given their busy schedules. The interview sessions with employees varied between 40 and 90 minutes and were usually carried out in the branches' meeting room away from the busy Banking Hall.

A range of interviews were undertaken with bank employees from all levels ranging from senior managers to frontline employees. Albeit the focus was on retail branches, senior/middle managers at the head offices were interviewed to understand the overall training agenda of the bank and how it is disseminated down to the branch networks. At the respective branch networks, three categories of employees were interviewed, namely branch manager, bank officers/executives and frontliners (i.e. tellers). Key personnel related to training such as Human Resources (HR) managers, training staff, selected line managers and supervisory staffs were also interviewed. With reference to Smith and Dowling's (2001) study, the 'interview protocols' for this study touched on similar matters related to training and informal learning but involved different categories of bank employees. Findings from these interviews were supplemented by secondary data analysis of related documents from the case banks such as human resources policies, training plans, company reports, strategic reports and annual reports. In analysing the case studies, this study utilised Stake's (1995, pp.71-90) four forms of data analysis and interpretation, namely: 1) categorical aggregation; 2) direct interpretation; 3) cross-case synthesis (see also Yin 2003a); 4) naturalistic generalisations (Creswell, 2007, p.163). Given that this study entailed comparing and contrasting two banks, it began with an inductive analysis to identify 'patterns' and 'themes'.

Collectively, collation of data and 'corroboration of evidence' from these multiple sources, methods, respondents and literature will ensure a high level of data triangulation (Stake, 2003; Yin, 2003a, 2003b). These are the types of data and evidence used to understand the way 'informal learning' takes place in Malaysian banks. To add depth to the analysis, a comparative analysis between the types of 'informal learning' between the two banks and the 12 bank branches was undertaken. Broadly, most qualitative researchers adopt a common strategy in data analysis, that is, the use of coding. Data was initially 'coded' into 'meaningful segments' before they were analysed and categorised to create 'broader themes' (Creswell, 2007: 148-149).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the New Economy, a competitive and volatile environment has necessitated the need for 'informal learning' to complement formalised learning. As this study showed, 'informal learning' at the workplace is closely associated with a bank's 'training culture'. Feedback from senior managers (i.e. Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, HR Heads etc.) highlight that a training culture has to be enhanced amidst the competitiveness and volatility of the contemporary banking environment. As the largest bank in Malaysia, CSB1's training culture is admirable with a hefty training allocation of RM50 million per year. In fact, according to CSB1's Executive Vice-President of Learning And Knowledge Management, the bank's commitment

towards training is reflected through a higher than stipulated percentage of training by the regulator (i.e. Bank Negara Malaysia, BNM). Albeit BNM's Guidelines on Staff Training Expenditure (1991) mandates banks to allocate 2.5% of their previous year's total gross salary for training, CSB1 commits higher i.e. 6%. The Executive Vice-President emphasises that the bank's training expenditure is based on the American Society for Training and Development, with clear allocations of funds allotted for each specific area like professional development, information systems support, management and leadership development. Being Malaysia's largest domestic bank, it definitely has a clear training direction and systematic training agenda. CSB-1 even has a training plan called the 'Learning Strategy Deployment Plan 2002-2007'. The bank also has its own Learning Management Council and Learning Governance to ensure systematic deployment of learning that is consistent with the bank's overall strategic plans. The following sections will showcase how the training culture is translated into informal learning at the workplace.

Informal Learning in Malaysian Banks

In Malaysia, training for officers and frontline employees in banks is undertaken at either the headquarters (training centre) or at bank branches, with the former adopting more formalised forms of learning whilst the latter epitomises informal learning. For instance, there is a designated location in Bangi, Selangor where the training centres for local and foreign banks agglomerate. On a visit to the training centres of both CSB-1

and CSB2 at Bangi, it was observed that the physical set-up and surroundings were rather regimented and resembled a classroom environment. Syllabi were structured into modules and delivered by instructors. Simply put, employees were learning in a formal environment. Employees could opt to either 'self-nominate' or 'be invited' by management to attend training at the Bangi headquarters, which is a 45-minute drive from Kuala Lumpur. The types and availability of training courses by both case study banks are published in their annual Training Directory/Calendar.

New ways of knowledge acquisition.

By contrast, new ways of informal learning and modern channels of knowledge acquisition have emerged at the branch level. Similar to banking studies in Germany and Australia (Finegold *et al.*, 2002; Kitay, 2001), informal ways of learning are making a headway in Malaysian banks. A comparison and summary of training channels and patterns of informal learning at both case study banks are displayed in Table 1.

Indeed, new channels of informal learning have surfaced besides traditional on-the-job (OJT) training where senior employees (i.e. senior tellers) will teach and 'buddy' newcomers. In the wake of Universal Banking with banks favouring sales and marketing of new products and services, Malaysian bank branches have emerged as new training grounds for employees as 'daily morning briefings' are conducted at branches. Before opening

Table 1
Comparison of Training and Knowledge Acquisition Channels at the Case Study Banks

CHANNELS OF TRAINING AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION (FOR OFFICERS AND FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES)	CSB1	CSB2
At headquarters		
1) Classroom training at Bank’s training centres (at Bangi, Selangor)	✓	✓
At the branch	✓	✓
1) On-The-Job Training (OJT) (i.e. buddying, mentor-mentee, ‘Sifu’ system)	✓	✓
2) Daily morning briefing at the branch’s Banking Hall before work begins	✓	✓
3) Online training via Learning Management System (website/portal)	✓	-
4) Staff intranet via HR website	-	✓
5) Multimedia learning through DVD	-	✓
6) Counselling/brainstorming/sharing session with superiors/peers	-	✓
7) Competition (in-house) (i.e. pop quizzes, crossword puzzles, etc.)	-	✓
8) Train employees ‘real-life’ context via mystery shoppers/mystery callers	-	✓
9) Circulation of daily emails, bulletins, memos etc. disseminating latest information	✓	✓
10) Invite external experts to talk to branch employees	-	✓
11) Send employees to external training academies (i.e. Malaysian Airlines Academy)	✓	-
KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION TECHNIQUES (FOR OFFICERS AND FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES)	CSB1	CSB2
1) Automatic nomination by superior (i.e. branch manager, asst. branch manager)	✓	✓
2) Self-nomination (Training Directory/Calendar)	✓	✓

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork Survey, 2008

time at 9.15am when most Malaysian banks commence business, all levels of bank employees congregate at the Banking Hall to listen to a 15-minute briefing from their superiors and peers. They start work only after the briefing. A stark

contrast from the formalised settings at the headquarters, informal learning at the branch takes place in a convivial environment amongst colleagues where, as Cross (2007) rightfully phrased it, the bank employees become “co-participants” as well as “contributors” to the learning process. This is because everyone in the branch has an opportunity to contribute and impart knowledge to his or her colleagues. A typical briefing may begin with the branch manager briefing employees on the latest products or developments followed by the assistant manager updating employees on operational matters. Subsequently, with the rising importance of sales, daily airtime is allotted to financial executives/relationship managers to disseminate information and share with colleagues the latest banking products/services. This informal way of sharing knowledge is the key strategy to broaden the knowledge base of colleagues so that they can cross-sell and refer potential clients to the sales team.

Undeniably, Malaysia’s banking industry is gearing to be highly knowledge-based. Interviews with all levels of branch employees highlight that cross-selling of traditional banking products on their own as well as with new products such as insurance and investment-linked products, requires bank employees to acquire voluminous amounts of ‘knowledge’ and be constantly updated with current affairs, thus, accentuating the need for continuous and informal modes of learning. The high demand for knowledge is lamented by a teller with 12 years of experience as follows:

The fact that we need to think more and be more knowledgeable now is because customers are getting so smart and inquisitive nowadays. Unlike before, they now ask so many questions. Sometimes they ask you 10 questions! They even ask you questions that are not related to banking, thinking that as bankers you know everything!

This high demand for knowledge is further compounded by the shift in Malaysian banking from merely deposit-taking/credit-extending to financial advisory/consultancy. A trend parallel to that found in advanced economies, the focus on sales and marketing amongst bank employees has necessitated the need for them to be innovative and to have sound banking knowledge in addition to correct and comprehensive knowledge of the customer’s business and personal profile. Interestingly, ‘salespersons’ from both case study banks concurred that having the right types of knowledge and skill is of utmost important, hence, implicating the need for continuous and new forms of knowledge acquisition and learning methods. The following remarks were reported by one of them:

We salespeople should know what customers want. We try to figure out what they want. Maybe they need a certain product but they do not realise is so we are to make them realise they actually need this product. This is a different

function. We are now playing a pro-active role. That's why now the salespeople will have to enhance their skills. In the past, you could just quote one product and sell the good features of this product each time you see the customer. That officer is good only in that product but now is different. When you see a customer you need to find out what he or she wants. You need to know all the products otherwise you won't know which product is suitable for the customer. So the salespeople will have to enhance their knowledge and skills. For salespeople nowadays, the skills and knowledge required is higher if they want to fit into the model of 'customer-centricity'.

In the same vein, another financial executive quoted the following:

You need the basics like what are the investment and the financial profiling of your customer. When customers come in, are you able to do the basic financial profile for customers or not? What are their assets, liabilities and cash flow? To be able to profile out what they have and what they need. Some customers actually don't know what they need. They only have this and now you do for me. You need to identify what customers really want. Only then you can give

some recommendations/solutions. You propose to customers whether it suits them or not because some customers will not tell you everything. You need to probe them to get the full financial profile.

Due to such demands and pressure, bank branches have wittingly introduced new channels of informal learning to heighten the knowledge level of employees. Besides mechanisms like e-learning (i.e. Learning Management System, intranet), branch employees are urged by their branch managers to read and be aware of the latest information on new products offered by their own bank as well as their competitors. Information is disseminated through informal materials such as emails, bulletins and memos. The pressures and stress from continuously acquiring knowledge in the New Economy was exacerbated when CSB2 imposed training/learning in a 'real-life' context. In CSB2, 'mystery caller/mystery shopper' concepts were implemented where officers from the bank's headquarters disguised as customers and walked in to a branch to undertake spot-checks on the knowledge level and work performance of employees.

Interestingly, it was discovered that informal channels of learning differed from branch to branch and were modified base on the foresight, ingenuity and drive of the respective branch managers. For example, CSB2's TTDI branch has been innovative in imparting informal learning by implementing internal branch pop

quizzes, crossword puzzles etc. to encourage employees to read and be knowledgeable of contemporary banking products. The customer service manager at the TTDI branch was proud to declare that these pop quizzes and word puzzles were the brainchild and strategy of the branch manager to disseminate and update knowledge among his branch employees every time new banking products/services were introduced in the market. However, due to time constraints and heavy workload at the branch, some employees complained that they did not have sufficient time to read, revise and equip themselves with this new knowledge. Clearly, this in turn will affect their daily work performance.

Other methods of informal learning include counselling, brainstorming and 'sharing sessions' with superiors and peers to generate and disseminate knowledge. At other times, external experts like fund managers are invited to brief and update branch employees at CSB2 on investment products. Importantly, best practice is emulated from other service industries when CSB1 sent their tellers to the Malaysian Airlines Academy for the 'Sayang, Sayang Customers Campaign' ('Love Your Customers Campaign') at Kelana Jaya. As one teller pointed out,

They send us there to share experiences with them (air stewardesses) on how to convince the customers. So it is different ways because they are the air stewardess on the air and we are on the ground.

Clearly, the main intention of sending bank tellers to the Academy was for them to share and to exchange experiences and learn real-life lessons from their counterparts in the airline industry and vice-versa. This is because these two categories of employees are frontliners who have face-to-face contact with their customers every day. As highlighted in Hochschild's (2003) seminal work, air stewardesses are frequently exposed to the unpredictable temperaments of passengers. Similarly, in this study of bank employees, the shift to sales capitalises on the teller's first point-of-contact with the customer to close any potential deals.

Expansion of informal learning methods.

In-depth interviews with branch managers and senior bank employees converge, that is, training and informal learning at Malaysian branches have expanded over the years. Traditionally, officers and frontliners merely received initial induction training at the headquarters or brief start-up training sessions at the branch administered by senior colleagues, commonly known as the 'Sifu' or buddy system amongst the respondents. The term 'Sifu' is a Chinese colloquial term that means 'master/teacher'. During the interviews, the junior tellers viewed senior employees who trained and buddied them as their informal masters/mentors or 'Sifus'. However, as this study reveals, the vagaries and volatilities of the unpredictable banking environment have triggered the need for more branch training, or more precisely, informal forms of learning at the branch level such as daily morning

briefing sessions, counselling/brainstorming sessions amongst colleagues, circulation of daily emails/bulletins, inviting external experts to talk to branch employees and to the extent of sending employees out to external training academies (i.e. Malaysian Airlines Academy) as detailed earlier. Most significantly, scholars (McGuire et al., 2010; Cross, 2007) highlighted, technological innovations have aided and quickened the dissemination of informal learning via various e-delivery channels such as CSB1's Learning Management System (i.e. My Campus) and CSB2's intranet via their internal human resources website. Akin to strategies adopted in most advanced countries, Malaysian banks are emulating their Western counterparts in transforming their banks into a platform for continuous, pro-active and informal learning to take place.

To complement the above, Malaysian bank employees are provided with another channel of informal learning, the Institute of Bankers Malaysia (IBBM). An interview with IBBM's Chairman revealed that IBBM had played a significant role as the professional and educational body for Malaysian bank employees since its inception in 1977. As extracted from IBBM's 2008 Learning Education and Development Directory, besides providing formal industry-focused professional certifications for bank employees, IBBM has kept abreast of volatile, global changes out of sheer necessity in order to provide "informal sources of learning and knowledge acquisition" (IBBM n.d.). These include the

publication of IBBM's bi-monthly newsletter, the availability of an Information Centre as well as an e-library, an e-learning domain on its website, specially-commissioned and general training/reference materials in the form of self-learning CD-ROM packages, the Banker's Journal Malaysia as well as frequent informal activities such as tea-talks, video presentations and debates that are held at the IBBM premises at Damansara, Kuala Lumpur. Clearly, from these findings, the role of informal learning is crucial to equip modern Malaysian bank employees with the requisite skills demanded in the New Economy.

CONCLUSION

Globalisation has redefined the function and importance of both formal and informal learning in Malaysian banks. Radical and irreversible changes to production methods in banking have necessitated the demand for knowledge workers and the need to be continuously updated with the latest knowledge to be competitive. Thus, this is an era where banks no longer can be totally dependent on the formal education system or the State in terms of knowledge provision. Employers and employees themselves have to be proactive and to intervene by means of upgrading their own knowledge to remain competitive. Clearly, in this study, the learning gaps, training needs and new knowledge demands are addressed with the re-emergence of informal learning at branch networks to complement and supplement formalised learning at the banks' respective headquarters or formal education obtained

prior to joining the industry. Evidently, both case study banks adopted various informal learning methods to develop their human talent where banking employees as knowledge workers play a pertinent role in acquiring knowledge formally as well as informally to improve themselves. Concomitant with the arguments by Marsick and Watkins (1990) (cited in McGuire *et al.*, 2010) as well as Cross (2007), Malaysian banking employees do in fact play the role of ‘co-participants’ and have control over as well as contribute towards the entire learning process at their workplaces. Here, the symbiotic relationship between formal and informal learning clearly shows that neither one is more superior than the other. In today’s banking industry where the ‘latest knowledge’ is prime commodity, there is dire need for knowledge to be acquired, exchanged and disseminated in an unprecedented speed, failing which, the knowledge content and competitiveness of an individual employee to compete in the volatile surrounding can be jeopardised.

Hence, the need for new and ingenious modes of informal learning augurs well for modern banking culture because informal learning allows learning to take place “anywhere, anytime” as well as to fill the gaps left behind by formal learning. More crucially, the re-emergence of informal learning will revisit current policies on Vocational and Educational Training (VET), an area often overlooked in the broader human capital agenda. Also, in Malaysia’s quest to be a fully-developed nation by 2020, a paradigm shift in mindset is necessary

where flexibility in learning needs to be advocated at all levels, be it through formal or informal channels.

Due to the constraints of time and manpower, this study only managed to examine avenues of informal learning and training in two domestic banks in Malaysia. Given that research in informal learning is still lacking and largely absent, informal learning in foreign banks in Malaysia is a viable area for future research. Subsequently, another potential research area is the impact of informal learning on a bank’s performance and competitiveness based on a longitudinal approach.

As showcased in this case study of Malaysia’s banking industry, other Malaysian services industries should emulate the best practices wherever possible and open up new avenues for (informal) learning given that knowledge acquisition is a continuous and lifelong endeavour. As Cross (2007) argued, “formal learning did the trick for training factory workers how to follow procedures”, but, for post-industrial or services workers like contemporary Malaysian bank employees, it is of the utmost importance to inculcate alternative forms of learning, namely, informal learning. In conclusion, this paper argues that other services industries in Malaysia should follow suit and adopt informal learning as being done by Malaysia’s banking industry, and endeavour to integrate and ‘formalise’ informal ways of learning in Malaysian society.

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The Parallel Quest for Identity in Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

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ABSTRACT

The present paper, informed by the principles of comparative cultural studies, is an attempt to trace the parallel wistful search for identity within the cases of Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* (1937) and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). We argue that the products of these two authors are comparably the outcome of their similar understanding of transformed and stained cultural and socio-historical conditions coloured by an evocative reminiscence of the past that is used as a tool for critiquing the present. Their creations are platforms on which the protagonists interweave the real and unreal, and devotion and revulsion in an apparently futile attempt to nostalgically re-create a lost identity marked by America's Great Depression and Iran's inefficient dynasties whose loss and effects (symbolised by the disgraced female characters) have made them confused and imbalanced. Published around 1930s, both stories are portrayals of stained values of the time because of which both main characters feel confused and lost in a world marked by degeneration, degradation, disillusionment and madness. Hence, by juxtaposing these two stories, this article discusses how subtly and similarly Hedayat and Faulkner interposed their deep-seated concern over their countries' cultural and socio-historical upheavals into their famous literary masterpieces, amidst two critical eras of their countries' annals.

Keywords: Culture, identity, *The Blind Owl*, *The Sound and the Fury*, values

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INTRODUCTION

Upon reading *The Blind Owl* (1937) and *The Sound and The Fury* (1929) for the first time, one may think that there is only a touch of similarity and little ground of homogeneity

and comparability between Hedayat and Faulkner's works. However, a deft critique of judgment would offer concepts and canons that seem to be the result of similar processes of artistic creation and analogous understanding of the texts' contemporary socio-historical stimuli. These points of similarity provide a fertile ground for a comparative review of the stylistically parallel connotations and denotations hovering in both cases. Both stories picture protagonists who have already started a process to shape their identities in a desired way; a process which is accompanied by their zealous desire to actualise their loved ones' decency and perfection. However, their inability in achieving this makes them evince chaotic waves of nostalgia mingled with paranoia in their manners and thoughts, which in turn ends in their inability to shape the desired infallible identity.

The American novelist's text, *The Sound and the Fury*, gives the sketch of a devastated American family and how their heterogeneous perspectives, coming chiefly from their ostensibly unified but indeed fragmented kinship, has disorientated this Southern family from irrevocable disorders and a poignant fate and future. The other text by an Iranian avant-garde writer pictures the pathetic life of a cognisant, yet alienated person who lives in a culturally unbalanced society in a politically dark period of time and who is falling "deeper and deeper into the abyss of uncertainty and madness" while "searching for an 'unsullied' Persian cultural identity" (Coulter, 2000, p. 2-8).

The basis of the similarity between these two novels is that both portray characters who are endeavouring to shield and preserve their loved ones and values that they have traditionally inherited from past generations. The protagonists in these works are entangled in difficult situations because they find themselves lost in a world which seems neither familiar nor promising. The world that they live in sounds like a very threatening puzzle without any possibility of the pieces being put together to solve the puzzle. It is to escape from the limits of such a world that they both struggle to revive a seemingly glorious past whose values they believe are besmirched by the hostile inglorious present. That is why, despite the spate of all traumatic incidents, they struggle hard to recapture that glorious past and reshape their identities based on those values and criteria. Yet, all their fatigueless quests to balance out their sufferings and achieve that desired identity do not end in success and that is why they finally yield to mental and physical eruption and more isolation that balloon into the tragic ruination and dissipation of certain (cultural) values.

Comparative Analysis

The main character (anonymous) in *The Blind Owl* is typified as a paranoid artist, sardonically skeptical and an introvert, reactive towards social events and entirely overwhelmed by a deep-rooted sense of loss of identity. Initially, he finds himself entangled with his platonic love for an elysian girl whom he later on buries in the deepest layers of the ground (First

episode) and afterwards he gets obsessed and nostalgic with his official and legal wife who resembles the ethereal girl in the first section and whom he ends up murdering in her room (Second episode). Witnessing the defilement of his point of nostalgia in both sections, the anonymous character ends up confused in a locked-up world, devoid of any rationality, hope and meaning and this pushes him over the edge into extreme solitude.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner sketches out the life of the Compsons, who suffer from the breakdown of their close-knit familial relationship that is on the verge of falling into decadence. Quentin and Jason, the embittered victims of their neurotically self-absorbed mother who has withheld her maternal love and kindness from all her children, strive to respond to their emotional vacuum by turning to Caddy to fill it. Quentin also proves to have been struck by the same feeling of protection of the beloved that is shattering his mind inescapably. Portraying himself as a hypersensitive brother – and while his sister is the only alternative of emotional support in their family – he is unable to get over his sister's wrongdoings and does anything to put an end to his sister's misdemeanours, though it is all in vain.

However, the protagonists' efforts in bringing disorder back to order and their quest for identity only end up in their total destruction: suicide for Quentin and annihilation of values and perfection for the nameless narrator of *The Blind Owl*. What we find here is, in addition to a lot of other

things, “disruption of familial relationship and reversal of roles and relationships” as Khoshnood calls it in his reading of Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (2012, p. 27-28). Therefore, both stories' central characters are witness to their loved ones' defilement, which inevitably triggers madness and leads them to clutch at any possible expedient to lessen the pain. Exploring such a common theme and other similarities between the works of two writers from different societies and cultures brings a better understanding of the cultural and socio-historical contexts of these writings.

This comparative cultural study of Hedayat and Faulkner is based on the principles suggested by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek in his informative article “From Comparative Literature Today toward Comparative Cultural Studies” (1999). In his article, he invites scholars not to try establishing a hierarchy that places one work above the other; instead, he advises them to consider “evidence-based research and analysis” (ibid, p. 16) and focus on ‘comparison’ in order to investigate the ‘how’ and not the ‘what’. In this study of Hedayat and Faulkner's works we find what Tötösy calls “the processes of [their] communicative action(s) in culture and the how of these processes” (ibid, p. 17). Therefore, we try to make a “dialogue between cultures, languages, literatures, and disciplines” and not to prefer one to the other (Tötösy, 1999, p. 15).

A comparative analysis of these similar works reveals both writers' predisposition for reflecting and resuscitating and once

valued historical, cultural and even political principles or morals of their plagued societies. We argue here that converging socio-historical, political and cultural upheavals have led both writers to lament such drastic devaluation of values in their societies. In fact, if we decode the polysemous aspects of both works of fiction, we will notice that they are not just the lamentations of two lovers for the loss of innocence in their beloved, but that the women in both cases are symbolic of their nations. The main purpose of this article is to foreground the comparable cultureoscopic strands of these two books that emphasise some similar socio-historical references through which both writers express their awareness and concern of the mayhem existing in their countries and demonstrate their zeal for revitalising a lost but highly valued identity.

Analysis of Texts

“Hedayat and his generation of intellectuals lived in an era marked by fundamental changes in almost all aspects of life. The Constitutional Revolution (1906–1911), the rise to power of the first King of the Pahlavi Dynasty, Reza Shah (1925–1941) and the ensuing industrialisation, modernisation and westernisation of Iran (Yavari 46, 2008) were among some of the significant currents that pulled Iran’s social, political and cultural spheres away from their past influences at a speed unprecedented in the country’s history” (Yavari 46, 2008).

However, the reign of Reza Shah is deemed to have been a historically overriding

phase in Iran that is often regarded as a failure concerning the usurpation of Iran’s cultural heritage in spite of the King’s exertions in maintaining the country’s sovereignty and unity. Although Iran was never officially colonised, two imperial powers, the British and the Russians, had much economic and cultural control over it. Put simply, the unofficial colonisation changed the country into a high-yielding ground for those who were after its unique cultural and natural heritage. As Mohammad Gholi Majd attests, “State department records document vast amount of antiques and archeological finds taken out of Iran between 1925 and 1941, a period when most of the Persian objects in European and American museums were acquired” (2001, p. 8). He even touches upon the fact that “not only had Iran’s oil resources been plundered, its very cultural heritage had been systematically looted or destroyed” (ibid). This reveals the country’s adverse cultural condition in that period.

Hedayat’s *The Blind Owl* is imbued with this sense of loss of cultural identity. The story presents an ethereal girl whose purity symbolises the importance and value of identity. She is characterised as a girl who “beholds frightening, magic eyes, eyes which seem to express a bitter reproach to mankind, with their look of anxiety and wonder, of menace and promise” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 13). In fact, the writer portrays the girl as a magical and threatening, yet promising character. He mentions the word “promising” though he knows that the girl’s presence would be ephemeral and he would lose her soon.

After the girl dies, he manages to paint her eyes since he “had never been anything else than a painter of dead bodies” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 24). He then decides to chop her body up and put it in a steamer trunk as he is obsessed that strangers might defile her beauty and decency with their glances. As he leaves the house at the break of dawn, he starts asking himself, “What point was there to my existence now that she had gone?” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 26), revealing his apparent sense of loss of existence and identity without the girl.

While leaving the house, he looks for someone who can help him carry the trunk, but dispiritingly enough, he sees no one but a bent-up old man sitting at the foot of a cypress tree, who agrees to help him for no obvious reason. He heaves the huge suitcase up into the hearse and slides it onto his chest firmly; it is so formidable and heavy as if “it has been pressuring upon [his] chest for all time” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 28). While heading towards the cemetery, he witnesses his surroundings as if he is totally alienated from every human being in a way that “the windows, the walls of the houses appear to possess the property of instilling intense cold into the heart of the passer-by, one [can feel] that no living creature could have ever dwelt in those houses” (ibid). Here, he pictures the city enveloped in dense mist, as if it has been jinxed and ravaged probably by ethereal beings or unknown radix. He is carrying the trunk and the dead body to bury it deep under the ground alluding that he wishes to entomb his identity; this bears out the reflective, refluxing and terrorising

pressure he is experiencing.

The rider stops the hearse in the vicinity of the shrine of Shah Abdol-Azim that was of considerable import in Iranian’s cultural and religious tenets down to its destruction by Jengiz Khan in the thirteenth century A.D. The old man helps him dig a hole for burying the body and he surprisingly unearths an ‘ancient glazing jar’ that he later on takes as his payment. After long hours of digging and eventually burying the body, he decides to head home. On his way home, the narrator loses trace of the hearse that took him there and he begins to feel lost. He has no idea where to go since “she had gone, since [he] had seen those great eyes amid a mass of coagulated blood, while [he] felt that [he] was walking in profound darkness...the eyes which had been lantern lighting [his] way had been extinguished forever” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 31). Half way down the road, he stops when he abruptly runs into the old man. He mounts on the hearse again and the rider says:

“Grave digging is my trade. Not a bad trade, eh? I know every nook and cranny of this place. Take a case in point – today I went out on a grave-digging job. Found this jar in the ground. Know what it is? It is a flower vase from Rhages, comes from the ancient city of ‘Rey’”
(Hedayat, 1957, p. 32).

These events are important to our discussion because they (directly or

indirectly) emphasise the demolition and burial of precious cultural objects that are employed symbolically to refer to the bitter facts of the era. Since Rey, “The Bride of the World” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 44), is Iran’s foremost city with the undeniable reputation of being a culturally distinguished place with a remarkable historical background that stretches back to approximately 400 B.C., the writer seems to have had a deliberate motive in mentioning this spot. Moreover, he even cements this nostalgic feeling of loss of cultural heritage in the proceeding section when he groans, “I do not know where I am at this moment, whether the patch of sky above my head and these few spans of ground on which I am sitting belong to Nishapur or to Balkh or to Benares” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 42), all illustrious cities with well-known historical objects and antiques and seemingly on the verge of degradation.

The important point is that upon returning home, the narrator sees the old man thrust the vase onto his chest and the narrator carries it into his room where he realises the “almond-shaped panel [vase] was ‘her’ portrait ... the face of a woman with great black eyes, eyes that were bigger than other people’s” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 34). He takes out from the tin box the portrait he had painted of her the night before and compares the two. Surprisingly enough, “there is not an atom of difference between [his] picture and that on the jar” (ibid), which suggests there must have been somebody just like him with the same nostalgia, residing formerly in that area. He

then regrets having buried the ethereal girl (cultural heritage) and directly says that, “among those men [ancestors] there had been one, an unlucky painter, an accursed painter, perhaps an unsuccessful decorator of pen-case covers, who had been a man like me, exactly like me” (ibid). Thus, in a provocative declaration he says that, “It is three months- no, it is two months and four days-since I lost her [the ethereal girl] from sight” (Hedayat, 1967, p. 9). According to M. I. Ghotbi, “the narrator repeats the numbers two and four, in an effort to convey that civilization arose about two-thousand and four-hundred years ago” (1934, p. 67).

Consequently, since he is ostracised he writes for his shadow, which is incapable of judging and watching him like a blind owl, because no one understands how he is trying to criticise this cultural adversity, which changed from the wondrous heyday of the past (centuries ago) to the repellent present. In his book, *The Life and Legend of an Iranian Writer*, Homa Katouzian refers to Part I of *The Blind Owl* as “representing the narrator’s life in the present, somewhere in the decaying early twentieth century Tehran” (Katouzian, 2002, p. 120) and to Part II as taking place “in thriving Rey of a golden past” (2002, p. 116) during a previous existence of the protagonist, several centuries earlier, as justification of why that “flitting, elusive, and impalpable [ethereal girl] personifies the Iranian cultural identity” that is no more (Simidchieva, 2008, p. 25).

Hedayat who was fully conversant with this kind of destabilised cultural status in the

late 1930s endeavours to enunciate or report his deep-seated, breathless and chanted expostulation with these unfavourable cultural circumstances via a plethora of astounding imageries in his work of fiction. If the first narration (first episode) is of an upsetting vision or somehow the fleeting and fictional possession of a heritage that he lost due to his inattention that is emblematic of his country, the second narration (second episode) is of his frustration over losing the opportunity of owning that cultural identity that is depicted in the form of his wife in the non-fictional world. Nonetheless, for two months and four days, or perhaps two years and four months, the narrator and his bride have slept apart, he claims. She would, he fantasises, sleep with her various lovers including a repulsive old street vendor – an erstwhile potter – but not with him.

If in the first episode, the plot or sequencing is a quest to seize a flash of inspiration and culture, in the second narration the plot is one of regression, of losing that culture or identity. His wife continues to torture him; she even becomes pregnant. In the first part, he buries the culture with his own hands that is no better than auctioning off your property (to foreigners) for free, yet the grave-digger, who is the symbol of a staunch citizen, keeps and redeems the Rhages Vase. However, the second part displays how others, including the grave-digger, now turned into a nauseating old man who also possesses the glazed jar, are taking advantage of his spouse (culture) regardless of the real owner, and eventually take his vase, which was the

only remnant of his values. By putting both sections into one coherent context, we can conclude and allude that *The Blind Owl* is the well-pictured vision of an anarchic and disordered period in Iran's history that is perfectly symbolised and centralised in a female character in the midst of a bizarre setting, reshaping their role and impression from one section into the next that ultimately changes the sense of love to hate and honour to dishonour as it does from past to present.

Ironically, a close look at the narrative trajectory of Faulkner's story confronts the reader with the same ideology, imagery and nostalgic feeling for regaining certain cultural and historical values and ethics. Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* was first published in 1929, during in a period when the "United States was undergoing transformation more visibly and intensely than in any other period of its history as modern America" (Mainer 60,1999). This change embraced many different aspects of public life like the Wall Street Crash of 1929, known commonly as the Great Depression, and the traumatising repercussions of the Civil War. Nonetheless, the aftermath of these disruptions were perhaps more tangible and permeating in the realm of "private personal experience, where sexual behavior and attitudes became illustrative examples" (Mainar, 1999, p. 61). These piercing anarchies that engulfed certain sections of America's society touched the economic, social and cultural domains into a new territory that "began to weaken all the [standards] by turn of the century [and] it was not until the 1920s and

1930s that one sees a wholesale revision of the norms” (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1998, p. 267).

These tensions that, in essence, took root in the easy access of men to a world of commercialised eroticism, the uncontrolled “movements of women outside the domestic sphere” and “the working-class youth involvement in commercialized amusement” (Mainar, 1999, p. 61-62) overwhelmed the middle-class in its well-established norms of sexuality. As a result of this social anomaly, a gradually undermining “shift toward a philosophy of indulgence [that] marked the demise of nineteenth-century prescriptions about continence and self control” affected America’s cultural norms (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1998, p. 223). Nevertheless, women were still perceived through the notions of purity amidst all these tensions and changes.

Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* reflects these eroding changes as its undercurrent throughout the novel. In fact, the novel represents Caddy as a bridge or route of transformation that connects the honourable life of the Compsons in the past to the degenerated living conditions and norms of the present. She is a sister who also functions as the repository of affection to the three brothers when their innermost feelings are reflected and hoarded. Relatively, if the otherworldly girl in *The Blind Owl* is set to be the axis of alteration from approbation to degradation of cultural norms and values, Caddy in *The Sound and the Fury* resonates with the sound of the transformation of cultural glory to a ravine

of deflation. In fact, Caddy symbolises the United States; especially its Southern States that “after the Civil War, recounting its past, had become the nostalgic memory-keeping and mythmaking of defeated people” (Bleikasten, 1995, p. 89) and which changed from an agrarian culture into an industrial one at the turn of the century. In addition, Caddy’s sexuality embodies unrestrained carnal liberalism during these years that precisely stresses a crucial cultural transfiguration of that age that brought about social turmoil.

As a result of her deciding role, Caddy personates as the central point of balance and equilibrium for her three mentally unbalanced brothers. In fact, the three brothers seem to make their lives engaged deeply with this female character whose sexuality turns to be the harbinger of melancholy and pain. Resultantly, Quentin, who drowns himself because of the loss of innocence of his sister, might be the representative of Faulkner, who subtly censures the turbulences of the Southern States for destabilising the previously peaceful, noble and honourable atmosphere of the past as his value, and instead, echoing the raucous sound and the fury of the idiot brother, Benjy.

Generally, the Compsons, who were a once-respected and integrated family, living in the Southern States, are now victimised and traumatised by these happenings, turning to be gradually fragmented, disintegrated and eventually fallen apart. The portrayal of three different generations of the Compson family in the novel offers the opportunity

to witness their past in comparison with their present decadence. Therefore, *The Sound and the Fury* is a staggeringly artistic narration of America's culture and history prior to its economic downfall.

Accordingly, Faulkner utilises the novel's characters to represent the (lost) identity of his country and culture. Through Caddy's behaviour, the reader is led to remember the economic collapse and difficulties that the Compsons have had to face: of "selling Benjy's pasture for Quentin to go to Harvard" (Faulkner, 1929, p. 251) and of Jason's moderate job in a hardware store. Importantly enough, she can also be epitomised as a symbol of the radically mal-transformed sexual norms and attitudes of that period in which women were "ashamed of being a virgin" (Faulkner, 1929, p. 120). As a result of these changes, Quentin, who views his sister's virginity as a symbol of the family's honour, picks an ineffectual fight with her lover, Dalton Ames, to battle the changes, although figuratively and instinctively, which are affecting Caddy, who represents his social values and ethics.

Relatively speaking, both narrators in *The Blind Owl* and Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury*, exert themselves in recapturing their concerns for the suffocating cultural and historical changes. This is symbolised by watching over their loved ones to keep them away from any loss or change. *The Blind Owl* is the perfect manifestation of the unremitting labours of the protagonist in taking care of his beloved (identity), who will finally be defiled. Turning to Faulkner's

novel, Quentin and Caddy play the role of Hedayat's leading characters, and Faulkner makes great use of them as tools to transcend venereal aspects to arrive at a new sphere of meaning in which politics and history are highlighted as well.

What has been said about the protagonist in *The Blind Owl* and his concerns regarding the purity of the female character of the Hedayat novella is also true of Quentin's concerns about Caddy's transition from purity to defilement. Here, too, we may understand and interpret the novel in terms its socio-political determinants. Reading Faulkner's novel in the context of overwhelming American capitalism yields an interesting but surprising image of Quentin. For Southern men, as Wilbur Cash maintains, "the pure woman embodies established social order, while threats to that order are cast in terms of sexual assault" (1941, p. 114). This mode of representation is also quite prevalent in the literary works of southern agrarians that aimed at revealing and defending the "assault of crass and materialistic northern industrialism" (Atkinson, 2006, p. 112) through various forms of imageries and metaphors concerning the breakdown of southern values and honour.

Along the same lines, Quentin interprets Caddy's sexual maturity as the tainted picture of her previous innocence that diminishes her standing as a symbol of purity to that of capital or a traded commodity. Philip J. Hanson makes a keen observation that *The Sound and the Fury* expresses "anxiety over a traditionalist Southern socioeconomic

system in the process of disintegrating; a system which had long regarded itself as opposed – and superior – to capitalist marketplace values” (1994, p. 4). Thus, Quentin’s response to Caddy is instigated by the idea of anti-capitalism pervading Southern ideology, resistant to modes of capitalist production.

The fact that Quentin tries to shield Caddy’s virginity demonstrates that Quentin has perfectionist tendencies that make him value and struggle to preserve this old southern virtue. Nevertheless, his inability of making this happen leads him to contemplate incest with Caddy not because “he loved her body but some concepts of Compson honor” that he might be able to protect in hell (Faulkner, 1929, p. 459). However, his obsession with incest is paradoxical as incest would be a total violation of Southern morals; yet, Quentin has so strong a desire for guarding Southern integrity by any possible means that we are encouraged to see him as a man mainly concerned with Caddy’s innocence. Unable to hold Caddy back from her misconduct (culture and identity) and incapable of unifying his splintered family, who suffer from consecutive socio-historical failures, Quentin strives to deactivate the passage of time as the only possible panacea. This is similar to what the narrator of *The Blind Owl* does when he tries to manage his suffering with opium and alcohol when time is already dead and stopped.

Quentin’s obsession with time is the motif that proves to be distressing as it is an external determining force “whose

very progression brings disruption and destabilisation of the familiar” (Atkinson 2006, p. 96) simply because clocks and time are the markers of change in the historical past. In other words, everything Quentin assumes he might have missed, like the chance to fix and ameliorate Caddy’s life and resurrecting Compson honor only become feasible when the clock stops, holding up the difference between the past and the present. This shift of time is even more glaring through the exchange of the pocket watch, from his father to Quentin, which stresses the shift and exchange from the past generation to the present in order to push Quentin to “spend all his breath trying to conquer” (Faulkner, 1929, p. 117) the present, which is sullied with dishonour and failure. In addition, as Ted Atkinson states, “Time is the outward measure of the Compson decline, extending from the past when the family boasted prominent statesmen to the present when its members are plagued by diminished material means and debilitating neuroses” (2006, p. 96).

Therefore, the Compsons do not really think of the present as their friend because that is not what they can honour as a value as ‘present’ no longer embraces their ‘past’ values and identity. Ultimately, when Caddy is shunned by the Compsons due to her transgression, Quentin, who cannot accept her actions, tries to lighten Caddy’s absence as the main alternative to hope and love by taking diverse measures. In reality, since he no longer possesses his cultural value (Caddy and her purity) intermixed with socio-historical collapse (failure of

Southern State), he feels tormented and commits suicide as a fruitless search for identity. Surprisingly, at the beginning of his last day, he “breaks [his] pocket watch” (Faulkner, 1929, p. 127) and “avoids clocks since he is highly aware of the position of his shadow as a symbol of time” (Anderson 32, 2007). Edmond L. Volpe also suggests, “Quentin, in effect, kills himself to stop time because time is the ultimate reality” (2003, p. 115) and Quentin cannot cope with reality as “he yearns for an ideal world of innocence, gentility and nobility without change” (Anderson 37, 2007).

Accordingly, *The Sound and the Fury* can be read as a perfect example of grievance at the downfall of the Southern States. It contains some allusive anti-capitalist undertones that remind us of the socio-historical upheavals and turbulences culminating in Caddy’s immorality that stands as a symbol for the contemporary tarnished cultural norms. Faulkner denounces these heart-lacerating changes that depict the process of change from glory to debasement as time shifts from past to present and nostalgically pursues a once-present valuable identity that he thinks is cruelly disfigured and lost.

CONCLUSION

Having compared Hedayat and Faulkner in the light of Zepetnek’s principles of comparative studies and in terms of the authors’ awareness of their respective cultural and socio-historical contexts, we come to the conclusion that both authors were both stimulated by the similar spirit of

their own era and their unique overwhelming socio-historical features. Their reliance on the symbolic loss of feminine innocence and purity that represents the loss associated with cultural values makes us convinced that both Hedayat and Faulkner’s stories can be studied as of two ‘patriotic’ fictional pieces, aiming at presenting cultural and historical decay and searching wistfully for retrieving some tarnished or even lost identities. They both seek their glorious past in order to, sentimentally, avert their subsequent decline by employing the past for critiquing and bemoaning the present. Although decay and misery existed in the past as well, the “past’s beauty can flicker into life like the narrator’s fantasy about the ethereal girl’s corpse” (Fischer, 2004, p. 183) and his wife’s dead body and the remembrance of the once-present pride and honour of the Compsons.

In conclusion, it should be noted that this paper did not attempt to designate or confirm any clichéd presuppositions as to whether these apparent Beat Writers had psychological tensions, gender oppositions, religious polarities or even political hostilities, but in fact, it tended to manifest few unalleviated cultural and social diseases that affected or might affect even our everyday life. Both Hedayat and Faulkner direct us to the exhibition of history to show us a few tainted paintings of societies that suffer from cultural shifts and decline. The climax of disintegration is visibly seen in both stories: Hedayat’s narrator buries his identity or murders his wife and Quentin comes to commit suicide as his final and

only resolution. However, the dramatic climax of the stories seem to reveal more a message of warning than a pessimistic point of view. The writers of the works studied here warn us that upon neglecting our cultural values and social norms (and criteria) we may lose our irreplaceable heritage; what we have inherited from our ancestors can be ironically compared to our loved ones or even our being.

Based on what has been discussed in this paper both Faulkner and Hedayat have been affected by the overwhelming socio-historical and cultural shifts and alterations of their time. The socio-political and cultural instability of Hedayat's contemporary society accompanied by the usurpation of the cultural heritage of his country by foreigners affected the artist in the same way that the Great Depression and socio-cultural alternations affected Faulkner. Both writers, dispirited by the decline and demise of a seemingly glorious past and disillusioned by a suffocating devalued present (and future), have employed the loss of innocence in female characters to symbolise the loss of values and glories of their respective society and culture. Their artistic products are, therefore, portraits that remind us of a lost identity and urge us to resuscitate what we will need if we want to complete an arduous journey that crosses the confusing present to connect a glorious past to a possible promising future.

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The Relationship between Personality Types and the Type of Correction in EFL Writing Skill

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between two personality types, namely, extroversion vs. introversion, and two types of correction (self-correction and teacher correction) in an EFL writing context. Review of literature revealed that a few studies have been conducted on the efficacy of error correction techniques with regard to different personality traits of the language learners in an EFL context. Moreover, empirical studies that aim at determining the correlation between extroversion and language performance tend to yield inconsistent results. Therefore, an attempt was made in this study to investigate the relationship between self and teacher correction methods with the personality traits of Extraversion/Introversion among Iranian FL students. For this purpose, 48 medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran, taking the academic writing course, participated in the study. In the beginning, the questionnaire devised by Marie G. McIntyre (2010) was used to determine their personality types, i.e. extroversion and introversion. Then, the students were assigned into two classes. In one class, self-correction of the assignments was used and teacher correction was used in the other. Then, data were subjected to independent t-test as an indication of inferential statistics. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two personality types and the two types of correction.

Keywords: Personality, peer review, extroversion, introversion, teacher correction, writing skill

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INTRODUCTION

Many studies in the literature have shed light on the relationship between personality types in general and extraversion/introversion in particular with different aspects of language

learning and teaching. An increasing number of recent studies suggested that personality traits have incremental validity in predicting academic success and failure (Ackerman, 1999; Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2002, 2003a,b; De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1996; Petrides, Chamorro-Premuzic, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2005). For example, Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham (2003a,b) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between personality traits and academic performance in three longitudinal studies of two British university samples. Additionally, indicators such as attendance, tutorials, etc. were also studied in relation to the personality traits. The results showed that personality was significantly related to academic performance.

In the EFL context, Busch (2006) investigated the relationship between the extroversion-introversion tendencies of Japanese students and their proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The results showed that extraversion had a significant negative correlation with pronunciation, a subcomponent of the oral interview test. In addition, introverts tended to gain higher scores on the reading and grammar components of the standardized English test. Busch (2006) also concluded that even though introverts tended to score better on most of the English proficiency measures, it was found that junior college males who were extraverts had higher oral interview scores.

Gan (2008) has also worked on the particular personality dimension,

extroversion, in relation to oral performance in a second language (L2). The researcher used Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) to gather the required data. The study revealed that the extravert demonstrated a more active participation in the assigned assessment task, while their speech generally showed a higher level of accuracy and fluency. In another study by Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, Dissou, and Heaven (2005), which focused on the relationship between personality traits and preference for particular assessment methods in an ESL context, the results uncovered the positive correlation between extroversion and preference for oral examinations and both significant and positive correlations between extraversion and preference for group work.

Carrell (2002) has shown the relationship between personality types of writers and raters and holistic rating of writing. The results indicated that personality types of writers affect the ratings their essays received, and those of the raters affected the ratings they gave to the essays. Similarly, Karbalaee (2008) conducted a study on the relationships between extroversion/introversion personality variables and EFL learners' performance on listening strategies. The results showed that extroversion/introversion personality trait had no significant effect on EFL learners' use of listening strategies.

In a recent study, Erton (2010) investigated the relationship of different personality types, extroverts and introverts, with students' different learning styles. The findings showed that each personality group

(extroverts/introverts) has different learning styles. Although the tendencies are different, the success of these students did not show any significant differences (Erton, 2010).

Since the purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between different types of personality and the type of corrective feedback, it is worth mentioning that for more than a decade, a great deal of research has been done on the topic of written corrective feedback (CF) in SLA and second language (L2) writing (Ferris, 2010). Although more recent studies suggest that corrective feedback (CF) is valuable (see for e.g., Rahimi, 2009; Bitchener, 2008; Sheen, 2007), it is still not clear if it is effective with regard to different personality types of the language learners.

In another study carried out among Iranian EFL learners, the impacts of three types of corrective feedback on the acquisition of Wh-question forms were investigated. The results revealed the effects of metalinguistic feedback in both immediate and delayed post tests.

Moreover, the relationship between personality types (introversion and extroversion) and Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension ability has been investigated by Alavinia and Sameei (2012). They found out that there was a significant relationship between the students' personality type, i.e. extroversion and introversion, and their listening comprehension ability. In a more related study, Hajimohammadi and Mukundan (2011) found no significant impact of personality type on EFL students' writing progress in Iran.

The review of literature also revealed that a few studies have been directed at finding out whether definite error correction techniques in writing are more effective with regard to language learners' different personality traits in an EFL context. Moreover, empirical studies that aimed at correlating extroversion and language performance tended to produce inconsistent results. In fact, a few research studies have been done to determine whether definite error correction techniques are more effective with regard to different personality traits of the language learners. Hence, the results of this study will help to provide further advantages for language learners and their teacher to meet the goals of the programme. Here, personality of the student appears to be in the core of the issue. Since no such study has been done in an EFL context in Iran, so the necessity of undertaking this study has become more evident.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to determine the relationship between extroversion and introversion as two personality types and self-correction and teacher correction as two different corrective feedbacks. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, the following research questions are sought to be answered:

1. Is there any relationship between extroversion and self-correction in the writing progress?

2. Is there any relationship between extroversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?
3. Is there any relationship between introversion and self-correction in the writing progress?
4. Is there any relationship between introversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Participants

This study involved 48 medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran, as an EFL context. The students were 25 females and 23 males aged between 19 and 21 years old. The native language of all the participants is Persian. They enrolled in the academic writing course aimed at developing their writing skills. Their level of English proficiency was equitable based on their scores in General English II course, which is a prerequisite for the academic writing course. Two intact classes were selected for the study.

Instruments

For the purpose of collecting data required for this study, a questionnaire devised by Marie G. McIntyre (2010) was used to measure the degree of extroversion and introversion. The administered questionnaire included questions such as "(A) I express my opinions openly or (B) I keep my opinions to myself" and "(A) when I have a decision to make, I like to talk it over with other people or (B) I like to think it through on my own".

On the whole, it consisted of twenty items. Ten items are related to extroversion while ten others measure introversion. For each item, the students should distribute 3 points between each choice. If they felt that the choice (A) was almost true for them, they would then give 3 points to (A) and none to the other choice (B). If the answer (A) was often true but question (B) was sometimes true, they would then give 2 points to (A) and 1 point to (B). Finally, if the students had a high score in one category, then they might be likely to use that style most of the time. A moderate score may mean that they tend to be introverted in some situations and extroverted in others. Therefore, the mentioned questionnaire only tapped the type of personality types, i.e., that of extroversion and introversion. For more information, please refer to Appendix I.

Procedures

Two academic writing classrooms were selected. After the students had been made familiar with the objectives, requirements and grading scheme of the course, they were selected based on the extroversion-introversion questionnaire from the very beginning of the term and based on that, they were assigned into two groups (extroverts and introverts) in each classroom. Then, the instructor conducted the writing course aiming at developing the students' writing skills. The course lasted for seventeen weeks during which ten paragraphs on general topics in different genres including descriptive, process, opinion, comparison/contrast, problem/solution paragraphs

were assigned to the students to write after carefully instructing them on the grammar and fundamentals in paragraph writing. Each week, a typical paragraph was assigned to the students to work on as a homework. However, most of the work was done in the class as class assignments to ensure a better monitoring of the students' performance. Only the completion of the writing assignments could be done at home in the case of time constraint in the classroom. Therefore, the instructor could completely monitor the students' abilities and potentials in the area of paragraph writing. In one of the classes, the students themselves corrected the assigned paragraphs based on the rating scale provided by the instructor and then the instructor once more corrected the assignment according to the same criteria and gave the necessary feedbacks to the students and reminded them of the detected problems. The rating of the assignments was all done according to the following criteria for all types of paragraphs in the two classrooms:

Table 1. Criteria used for rating the assignments

Format	2 points
Capitalization & Punctuation	2 points
Topic sent.	3 points
Major sent.	4 points
Minor sent.	4 points
Conclusion	3 points
Grammar	4 points
Cohesion & Connectors	3 points
Unity	15 points
Total	40 points

The criteria were adopted from the writing book entitled, "Writing for paragraph to essay" by Zemach and Rumisek (2003).

On the other hand, in the second class (control class) the assignments were corrected by the instructor herself again based of the same rating scale and the feedback was given to the student. Here, no self-correction was done.

The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistics using minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Then, they were also subjected to the independent t-test as the representation of inferential statistics. The t-test was used to evaluate the differences in means between these two groups of students, namely introverts and extroverts. Here aimed to find the differences between the students' scores in the two groups, so we had to judge the difference between their means relative to the spread or variability of their scores. According to the analysis of data, the difference between the groups was not statistically significant, showing that there was no considerable overlap between these groups to conclude the types of personality had any relationship with the type of correction. A visual representation of the data is displayed through histograms. All of these analyses were done in SPSS, version 11.5

RESULTS

To better illustrate the pattern of the respondents' answers to the questionnaire, the items were divided into two groups, each of which concerning one personality type, namely introverts and extroverts. Then, the participants' personality type was determined. For each item, the students

should distribute 3 points between each choice. If the students have a high score in one category, then they may be likely to use that style most of the time. A moderate score may mean that they tend to be introverted in some situations and extraverted in others. In this questionnaire only the whole numbers like 2 were used not the numbers such as 1.5.

In the classroom where the method of self-correction was practiced, 9 introverts (34.6%) and 17 extroverts (65.4%) were observed. There were 12 introverts (54.5%) and 10 extroverts (45.5%) in the classroom where the teacher's correction was used as a traditional corrective feedback. The total number of participants was 48, as shown in Table 1.

Through descriptive statistics, the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation were calculated (Table 2). Table 2 illustrates the measures of central tendency and dispersion for the 48 students. The minimum and maximum for the score "a" which represents the computation of all questions concerning extroversion as a personality type were 2 and 21, respectively. Also, the minimum and maximum for the score "b" which indicates introversion for 48 participants were 9 and 28, respectively. The mean and standard deviation for scores "a" and "b" were 15.2, 15 and 4.76, 4.79, respectively. The distribution of the data was presented in the form of a quasi-normal curve as Figures 1 and 2 depict the same information.

Table 2
Group * type Cross tabulation

			type		Total
			introvert	extrovert	
group	1	Count	9	17	26
		% within group	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%
	2	Count	12	10	22
		% within group	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	21	27	48
		% within group	43.8%	56.3%	100.0%

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Score .a	48	2.00	21.00	15.2083	4.76226
Score .b	48	9.00	28.00	15.0833	4.79287
diff	48	-26.00	12.00	.1250	9.51511
Valid N (listwise)	48				

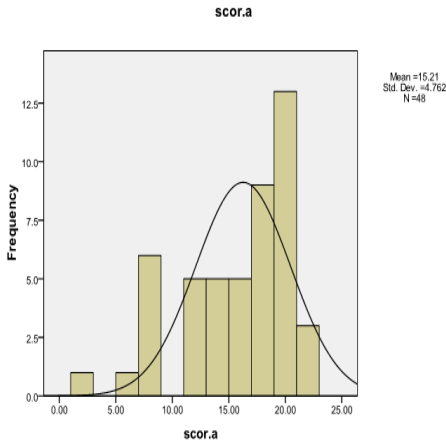


Fig. 1. Distribution of data

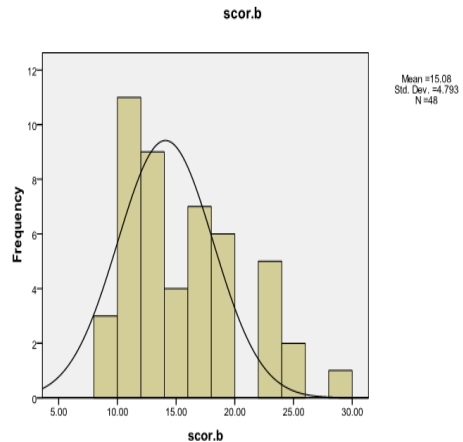


Fig. 2. Distribution of data

Table 4
Independent samples test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif- ference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
										Lower Upper
extro	self	5.445	.024	1.912	46	.062	2.56643	1.34213	-.13514	5.26801
	Teacher's			1.850	35.462	.073	2.56643	1.38720	-.24843	5.38130
intro	self	5.265	.026	-1.673	46	.101	-2.27972	1.36258	-5.02244	.46300
	Teacher's			-1.617	35.172	.115	-2.27972	1.40958	-5.14083	.58139

In order to answer the research questions and to find out whether there was any relationship between different variables in the writing process, an independent t-test was run through inferential statistics. The results showed that the differences were not statistically significant (See Table 3). The observed significance for both groups of extroversion and introversion was more than the significance levels.

To sum up, the main points can be encapsulated by answering the research questions.

1. Is there any relationship between extroversion and self-correction in the writing progress?
2. Is there any relationship between extroversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?

The findings indicated that no significant difference was found between extroversion and self-correction on one hand and between extroversion and teacher's correction on the other. The significance computed is 0.24, which is more than .062 and .073 (the significance level) for the two types of correction (Table 3). These results illustrate that although one's personality type might be extroversion or introversion, the type of corrective feedback whether traditional or self is not a determining factor.

3. Is there any relationship between introversion and self-correction in the writing progress?
4. Is there any relationship between introversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?

Although a positive correlation was found between introversion and self-correction on one hand and this personality trait and teacher's correction on the other, this relation was not statically significant. The computed significance is 0.26, which exceeds 0.101 and 0.115 (the significance levels) for the two types of correction (Table 3). Based on the findings, the error correction techniques in writing are not effective with regard to different personality traits of the language learners in an EFL context. The findings are in line with the results obtained by Busch (2006), Karbalaee (2008), and Erton (2010).

DISCUSSION

The present study intended to investigate the relationship between two personality types, namely extroversion vs. introversion and two types of correction, self-correction and teacher correction in relation to EFL writing skill. A questionnaire that included 20 items was used as the data collection instrument of this study to measure the degree of extroversion and introversion. The subjects were 48 medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran (an EFL context). They enrolled in the academic writing course at the university. They were assigned to write different paragraphs of different topics in different rhetorical organizations. After running a t-test to determine the relationship between the personality types and types of correction, the results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two personality types and the two types of correction. This result is in the same line with those of the study conducted by Hajimohammadi and Mukundan (2011).

Therefore, according to the findings, personality traits are not indicatives of students' academic success or failure. These results are not consistent with the common-sense view. In other words, The extent to which one might be outgoing or very silent in the class is not actually a good criterion to judge his or her academic success.

CONCLUSION

This study has shed some insights into the relationship between two personality types, namely extroversion vs. introversion, and two types of correction, i.e. self-correction and teacher correction, in an EFL writing context. The findings showed no significant difference between extroversion and self-correction on one hand and extroversion and teacher's correction on the other. The results also demonstrated that although there was a positive correlation between introversion and self-correction, the relation between this personality trait and teacher's correction was not statically significant. As for the obtained data, it could be concluded that the error correction techniques in writing are inconsistent with language learners' different personality traits in an EFL context. In other words, being extroverted or introverted has no significant effect on students' preference of the corrective feedback. These results are not consistent with the common sense view. However, due to the preliminary nature of the present study (to our knowledge, the attempt to relate personality dimensions to preference for academic correction methods) and the limitations, replication studies with larger sample size and in different academic contexts seem to be advantageous in leading the researchers to more reliable results.

Implications of the Study

According to the results of the present study, the extent to which one might be outgoing or very silent in the class is not a good criterion to judge the type of correction employed. So, the teachers should not consider these

personality dimensions as variables that influence their use of correction techniques. However, since foreign language writing classes in Iran are mostly teacher centred and individualistic teaching cannot be practiced due to crowded classes and also in spite of the results of the present study, by knowing the students' personality types, teachers can have a better understanding of the classroom dynamism and follow the activities, strategies and techniques which best suit their learners who have different personality traits.

Limitations of the Study

This study, like any other research, has its own limitations. Any attempts to generalize the findings of this research to general population should be made with caution. One of the limitations of this study is the small number of the students included as the respondents. Another limitation is the use of different topics with different rhetorical modes such as descriptive, process, comparison, etc., which may have produced different impacts. Effect of gender is not perused as the focus of the study. Therefore, it may also be interfering with the results. Thus, it is important highlighting these points as it is worth taking them into consideration in any further research.

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APPENDIX I

St. No: -----

INSTRUCTIONS

For each item, **distribute 3 points** between choices (A) and (B). Use whole numbers, **not** 1.5.

Example:

If you feel that (A) is almost always true of you, then give 3 points to (A) and none to (B).

If (A) is often true, but (B) is also sometimes true, then give 2 points to (A) and 1 point to (B).

1. (A) At parties, I tend to talk a lot.
 (B) At parties, I tend to listen a lot.
2. (A) People view me as lively and outgoing.
 (B) People view me as calm and reserved.
3. (A) I express my opinions openly.
 (B) I keep my opinions to myself.
4. (A) People think that I am easy to get to know.
 (B) People think that I am hard to get to know.
5. (A) I enjoy social gatherings where I can meet lots of new people.
 (B) I enjoy being home alone and having time to myself.
6. (A) I tend to speak before I think.
 (B) I tend to think before I speak.
7. (A) On a trip, I enjoy talking with people I don't know.
 (B) On a trip, I prefer not to talk to people.
8. (A) Spending too much time alone makes me tired.
 (B) Spending too much time with other people makes me tired.
9. (A) When I have a decision to make, I like to talk it over with other people.
 (B) When I have a decision to make, I like to think it through on my own.
10. (A) In my neighborhood or apartment complex, I know many people.
 (B) In my neighborhood or apartment complex, I know a few people.

Architectural Changes and Motivational Factors for Post-Earthquake House Transformation in Lar City, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Housing provision for post-earthquake victims requires consideration of the victims' cultural and social needs. Due to limited time and shortage of funds, quick construction of post-earthquake houses often fails to comply with the minimum needs of the occupants. Too often, such houses are either abandoned or transformed substantially, resulting in an overwhelming waste of resources. This paper aimed to investigate the transformation process of post-earthquake houses in Iran, in particular, people's motivational factors for these transformations. The methods used included systematic observations and map analysis of alterations to post-earthquake houses over a 30-year period (1970-2000), interviews with the households and questionnaire survey with 190 respondents. The results recommended that the design for these houses should address potential for transformability into pre-earthquake patterns and lifestyles, adaptability to new parts/construction and capability to reflect different requirements for indoor and outdoor spatial circulations. Analysis of house transformation in the 30-year period revealed that the majority of respondents were found to favour vernacular architecture design, which includes a courtyard in transforming their houses (51.1%) followed by the desire to follow the current trend (32%). The majority of houses had undergone major transformation, having added more than 98% of the

original built-up area to the houses. This research found that the mixed '*Temporary-Permanent*' housing reconstruction model was highly successful since it involved participation of end users from the very early stages of design and development in order to predict and accommodate later housing alteration issues.

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INTRODUCTION

Earthquake is one of the world's most catastrophic disasters, involving destruction of houses and infrastructure, injuries and loss of lives. The trauma after the disaster could also give impact to victims psychologically. Caia *et al.* (2010) asserted that impact of major earthquakes varies greatly as a function of both physical and social factors. They are generally highly fear-arousing and often traumatic due to a precarious lifestyle and the interruption to normal life that is associated with losing jobs, being relocated to a different area and living in temporary housing that is below normal standards of living (Kilic *et al.*, 2006). The main aim of post-earthquake housing construction has always been to provide immediate shelter for the victims (Davidson *et al.*, 2007). Baradan (2008) argued that even though most of the past attempts may have mitigated the risks, they have all failed in addressing people's future needs. In particular, due to time and financial constraints, there is a risk of not getting satisfactory long-term results in every project (Tasa *et al.*, 2007). This problem is magnified in the context of Iran due to its particular cultural and financial conditions (Fallahi, 2007c). Parva and Rahimian (2014) ascertained that majority of post-earthquake housing (PEH) occupants transformed their houses after a short occupancy period with

the intention is to make adjustments to fulfil their lifestyle and minimum living requirements.

If planned well, the transformational process could potentially convert these houses with ease into preferred homes for the affected people. That is, a thoughtful initial design could leverage the later transformations in terms of adapting the semi-permanent houses to residents' needs and lifestyle. Caiaa *et al.* (2010) stress that we need to investigate more systematically the characteristics of temporary houses in order to promote the physical and psychological health of people who have suffered a significant trauma and loss of home. A considerable part of post-disaster temporary housing programmes has been unsustainable and culturally inadequate as a result of unsuccessful strategies, misunderstandings about users' real needs and misconceptions in dealing with local conditions and resources (Felix *et al.*, 2013). This paper explores the PEH transformation in Lar, Iran in order to map and understand the problems of these transformations during a long-term occupancy. It investigates three core issues of post-earthquake housing transformations in Iran: 1) architectural characteristics of post-earthquake housing transformation, 2) people's motivations in transforming their PEH, 3) influencing factors on the specifications of post-earthquake housing transformations and 4) phase types of transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Post-Earthquake Housing Problems

The need for shelter as immediate post-disaster interventions is imperative (Barakat, 2003, Davidson *et al.*, 2007). This urgent need normally leads to large-scale reconstruction programmes commonly undertaken by the government and demanding overwhelming amounts of construction materials and skilled labour. (Peacock *et al.*, 2007). After a disaster, it is crucial to provide temporary housing as soon as possible to offer a comfort level consistent with the common standard of living (Johnson, 2007).

Providing temporary housing for disaster victims requires understanding of cultural background and how different post-disaster housing designs may affect resident's lifestyles (Felix *et al.*, 2013; Caiaa *et al.*, 2010; Marcillia & Ohno, 2012; Parva & Dola, 2007). Felix *et al.* (2013) cautioned that insensitivity to residents' needs in temporary housing provision has been greatly criticised, mainly for being unsustainable and culturally inadequate. A lack of understanding could result in a loss of the sense of ownership and social safety among the occupants (Barenstein, 2005). Long-term post-occupancy problems could appear when occupants try to improve their living conditions as they felt that the house was not good enough to address their needs (Parva & Dola, 2007). This paper posits that long-term problems of post-earthquake housing reconstruction could be minimised by making PEHs capable of future modifications based on households' prospective needs.

Much has been discussed about providing victims of disaster with temporary shelter (Arsalan, 2007; Barakat, 2003; Davidson *et al.*, 2007). It was thought that quickly providing shelter could assist victims to cope with losses and resume their daily activities. Unlike in normal situations where people can choose the type of house and the neighbourhood in which they want to live, earthquake victims have no choice but to accept what is given to them. Many of these quickly constructed houses become permanent homes as they are transformed and modified over time.

Housing Transformation Phases and Types

Transformation in architectural studies refers to changing and modifying a building into better condition during occupancy period. It consists of changing the form, function and pattern of buildings. Most of the building transformations involve residential buildings (Brand, 1994). Votava (2006) defines housing transformation as some indoors and/or outdoors changes that are based on households' requirements for making temporary shelters into more permanent homes.

Housing transformation after disaster may take several phases (Arsalan, 2007; Cole, 2003; Turan, 1983). Turan (1983) discussed two stages of post-disaster housing reconstruction: 1) providing victims with urgent shelter, which often involves providing them with tents in relief sites, and 2) constructing permanent houses for long-term occupancy. Cole (2003) extended Turan's (1983) classification by identifying

two additional ‘temporary’ stages: 1) emergency sheltering, 2) temporary sheltering, 3) temporary housing, and 4) permanent housing. According to this category, emergency and temporary shelter is occupied during the relief period (for less than one month), temporary houses are occupied during reconstruction period (for less than two years), and permanent houses are constructed to provide normal life for people. Further study by Arsalan (2007) added a fifth stage called “*temporary housing transformation*”. Temporary housing transformation is a more flexible model, comprising all the aforementioned four stages. The aim of this model is to provide the victims with a liveable home through long-term evolution, rather than demolishing altogether the temporary dwellings at some point and replacing them with new construction.

In discussing housing transformation, many works (e.g. Brand, 1994; Salama, 1998; Tipple, 1996) identified two main types of housing transformations, namely, “*add-In*” and “*add-On*” transformations. According to Brand (1994), in “*add-In*” transformations changes are applied inside the existing building without constructing any additional space whilst “*add-On*” transformations include additional constructions and have the potential to expand the built-up area of the original dwelling. Nguluma (2003) extended this view by defining “*interior transformations*” as referring to modifications of indoor spaces by only relocating internal walls and changing room sizes, and “*exterior transformation*” as consisting of changing

façade, windows and housing extensions. Okatay and Orcunoglu (2007) introduced a new step in housing transformations by explaining the characteristics of ‘*Rebuilt*’ where the original houses are demolished and changed totally; e.g. transforming detached or terrace houses into apartments. Mahmud (2007) listed five categories of house transformation: Slight Adjustments, Addition and Division, Total Conversion, Reconstruction and Rebuilt.

According to Tipple (1996), housing transformation could always contribute to architectural qualities of the houses so that it could increase households’ attachment to their houses and leverage their sense of belonging. From a different perspective, Habraken (1975) argued that housing transformation could develop quality of housing space and adjust social and economic conditions of living space. Tipple (1996) argued that any improvement in the quality of the living environment needs to be done during a long-term and based on the needs, interests and socio-economic status of households. Habraken (1975) asserted that studying housing transformations could reveal the households’ expectations of their living environments, which could be developed into lifestyle approaches for designing affordable houses (Salam, 2006).

At the later stage, house transformation could be the process of changing the physical structure to fit the owner’s preference and lifestyle, or to change a house into a home, or from being temporary to permanent. In short, house transformation phases are the evolution of the occupants in accepting and becoming comfortable with the PEH.

Motivation for House Transformations

In terms of motivation for transformations, Rapoport (1995) argued that socio-cultural goals are the main motivators for transforming houses. Shiferaw (1998) explained common motivation for housing transformation as follows: 1) socio-cultural goals, 2) changes in households' structure, 3) desire to generate more income, 4) addressing issues related to harsh climatic conditions, 5) desire to follow the prevalent housing forms and 5) new aspiration to reform the traditional design of houses. Salam (2006) analysed the impacts of lifestyle models on housing transformations and proposed three lifestyle models: *work-based*, *attitude-based* and *status-based*. In short, all these theories considered housing transformations as a result of three types of factor: 1) *architectural factors*, 2) *socio-cultural factors* and 3) *economic factors*.

Housing Transformations in Lar City

After the 1960 earthquake, the government decided to construct a new town near Lar,

rather than reconstructing the disaster site. There were two main reasons behind this decision: 1) the original city was located at a high-risk zone and 2) it was very difficult to rehabilitate the exhausted old site (Housing Planning Department, 1985). Consequently, the new city was founded on a land which was 4km from the southern border of the original city (Fig.1). The new Lar city comprises 48 urban blocks of which each block consists of 20 residential units. Each residential unit covers a 15m by 35m rectangle area (Fig. 2). During the first phase of this project, the government developed 375 residential units, which are dispersed all over the city to further motivate people to go and live there (Kashefy, 1970). Initially, the built-up area of every house was 35 m² and the houses were constructed using prefabricated semi-detached construction systems (Fig. 3).

According to the Housing Planning Department (1985), the main issues associated with these new constructions were: 1) the design did not address the



Fig. 1 Airplane view of old city and new city of Lar. Source: Google Earth.



Fig.2 Spatial planning of a pre-earthquake (Left) compared with the post-earthquake (Right) housing units in Lar.



Fig.3 A pre-earthquake housing façade (Left) compared with the semi-detached prefabricated houses (Right) in new Lar city.

minimum thermal comfort requirements of the area; 2) the road system was very inconvenient for the users; 3) the city was considered as being very far from the original town and 4) the design of the houses was very alien for the people of Lar. These factors were cited as the cause of dissatisfaction among the people and made it difficult to encourage them to move into

the new houses in the early period.

Since the people needed to have a place to stay, eventually, they moved in and transformed or renovated their houses. Lar had two kinds of housing transformations. It was observed that in the old town of Lar, the changes to the size of households was slow and followed the traditional transformation. However transformations

in the new city of Lar and post-earthquake area indicated a much higher rate and impact. Although this could be considered an opportunity for documentation of the experience for future reference, there is no previous formal study to investigate Lar's housing transformation process (Housing Planning Department, 1991). As a result of these arbitrary transformations, the share of built-up area within the residential properties of Lar has recently recorded an increase by more than 320%, a sharp increase in only three decades. Although the existing roads are sufficient to support the new population, there are still many problems due to insufficient infrastructure and services to support sudden changes (Housing Planning Department, 1985).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed mixed research methodology (Creswell, 1994, Groat, 2002) to investigate the qualities and motivations for the housing transformations in Lar's PEHs. The study relied on literature review (qualitative) as well as systematic observation and surveying people's perceptions (quantitative). In terms of qualitative data collection, literature review and document analysis were conducted in order to provide basic insights into the matter of study. Building upon the theories developed through reviewing literature, this phase documented all constructional information about transformations in PEHs. The results of this phase helped the authors to formulate the final questionnaire survey to evaluate people's perceptions about the

motivation to transform the original PEHs. Finally and for triangulation purposes, more advanced observation were conducted in order to empirically affirm for the results of the survey.

Systematic Observations

The sample of this study comprised 189 post-earthquake houses that were investigated by systematic observation. The collected data were coded according to an observation checklist sheet in order to be analysable by Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In accordance with the research objectives, the observation checklist comprised six parts: 1) House numbers; 2) Housing transformations with respect to the quality of extensions, changes in function, percentage of demolition, and division of post-earthquake house; 3) Date of major transformations throughout the four decades; 4) Comparison of transformed post-earthquake houses with original PEH and 5) comparison of PEH in terms of five characteristics (layout, typology, materials, openings, and ornamental elements; locations of houses with basic infrastructure and amenities). Moreover, two pictures and four plans of post-transformation houses were attached to each observation checklist.

Questionnaire Survey

The purpose of conducting a questionnaire survey was to investigate people's perceptions towards housing transformations in Lar's PEHs. In order to help the authors formulate the actual questionnaire survey, the study first conducted series of systematic

observations in order to have a better understanding of the type of transformations in the architectural characteristics (e.g. land and built area sizes, morphology, spatial planning, façades, constructional materials and constructional systems) of the PEHs (as suggested by Shiferaw, 1998).

Based on the theories discussed in the literature, this study divided the variables of the conducted survey into two groups: 1) building-orientated variables and 2) human-orientated variables. Building-orientated variables explained housing architectural characteristics before and after transformation, which were analysed in three stages: pre-earthquake-1960 housing process, post-earthquake-1960 housing process and post-transformation housing process. The human-orientated variables described the residents' ability to perform housing transformations and their need for transformations.

Data Analysis

In terms of data analysis, this research carried out both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Groat (2002) asserted that qualitative data should be directly interpreted by the researcher. In terms of quantitative data analysis, the study therefore coded and clustered the data of the systematic observations according to the concerns of the study (Creswell, 1998). The collected data through the conducted survey was analysed using SPSS version 17.0. The employed tests included basic Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviations etc.), Examination of Reliability Scale and

Hypothesis testing scales (e.g. Correlation Analysis and Regression, Variance Analysis (ANOVA), and Chi square).

Validation and Reliability

In terms of validation and reliability, the random error of the conducted survey was controlled by selecting an appropriate sample size. With regards to the controlling systematic error, Mansuorian (2002) asserted that three factors can facilitate the reliability of the findings in conducting a questionnaire survey: 1) designing a clear questionnaire for testing actual perceptions of people about research constructs, 2) employing different indicators with similar intention and running a reliability test among the similar indicators and 3) conducting a pre-test. This research employed local people as enumerators as they could adjust and explain the questions according to local terms of Lar. Moreover, some purposive repetitions were embedded in the questionnaire in order to facilitate future reliability tests. Finally, a pre-test survey was conducted for refining the questionnaire and reconsidering all vague questions. Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated for all groups of questions and when the value was less than 0.6, problematic questions were detected and reformatted. Consequently, as reported in different parts of the Results and Analysis section, the Cronbach's Alpha values of all groups of the final test were greater than 0.6, which is the significant level for showing the reliability of the questionnaire survey. In addition to considering these factors, this research also relied on the clarifications









by trained enumerators/ distributors during the data collection phase. They were architectural students who were trained and quite familiar with this research and PEHs of Lar. This consideration was motivated by the low educational background of the majority of the people of Lar who were not able to read and understand the questions properly. Finally, triangulation of data gathered from different methods, literature review and findings of survey and observation further assured the construct validity and internal validity of this study.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Architectural Characteristics of Transformations

Following Shiferaw (1998) and Portnov and Odish (2006), this study analysed morphologies, occupancy rate, function, building materials, and façades as important variables to describe the architectural characteristics of housing transformations. The distinctive similarities between the morphologies of pre- and post-earthquake houses in Lar illustrate that people wanted to transform the PEHs in order to link with their previous lifestyle. It was found that more than half of the cases in this study transformed the new semi-detached PEHs to include “*semi-central courtyard-houses*”

Table 2
Morphology of Different Types of Transformed PEHs in Lar

	TYPE1	TYPE2	TYPE3	TYPE4	TYPE5	TYPE6	TYPE7	TYPE8
Plan								
Type	Contiguity Longitude	Separate Longitude	Contiguity Widthwise	Separate Widthwise	Type 3 & 4	Type 1 & 2	Semi courtyard	Courtyard
Frequency	2	4	15	123	32	1	148	40
Percentage	0.5%	1.1%	4%	32.%	8.5%	0.3%	39.4%	10.7%

that they found more suitable for supporting their culture and daily activities. Table 2 presents the frequency of the eight types of transformed morphologies of PEHs in Lar in which more than 51.1% of the houses were transformed into semi-courtyard and courtyard houses. Further investigation reveals that these types are very similar to pre-earthquake houses. This shows that people had a strong tendency and attachment to culture and their vernacular lifestyle. In the meantime, 32% of houses were transformed in accordance to the current prevailing architectural styles. The results of the conducted observations also showed very significant transformations in land-use and built-up areas of PEHs. The residents added 98.4% more constructions to the original built-up area.

The results of this study revealed that the morphology of post-earthquake houses in Lar was dependent on two factors, namely, the morphology of pre-earthquake-1960 houses and the morphology of the current prevalent architecture. This is mainly aligned with the seminal literature. For instance, Shiferaw (1998) asserted that morphology of houses often changes during the transformation process. Portnov and Odish (2006) also claimed that transformations in morphology of houses are guided by the morphology of the current prevalent architecture. However, in the context of Lar's PEHs, the tendency towards rehabilitation of the previous lifestyle was an important issue that was neglected by the previous studies that investigated only normal (and not post-disaster) circumstances.

According to the findings, the average built-up area of Lar's PEHs increased by 75%, compared to its pre-earthquake houses. Based on Salam's (2006) theory, it was assumed that the first transformation in PEHs might be the expansion of the houses since sudden changes in lifestyle are not accepted by people. The findings of the systematic observations verified this assumption when it showed drastic increments in the built-up area of post-earthquake houses after transformations.

According to works by Salam (2006) and Shiferaw (1998), functional transformations mainly are caused by the desire of generating more income. This kind of transformation appeared in Lar when people tried to change the function of their houses from residential to small commercial entities. This transformation on one hand partly increased people's income, but on the other hand, disturbed the neighbours' privacy. In the meantime, according to the results of the systematic observation, the level of this kind of transformation was dependent on the location of post-earthquake houses and in most of the cases these transformations happened only in the houses that had direct access to the main roads. The results show that only 6.9% of PEHs (26 units) were transformed in terms of function. In those cases, houses that were facing main streets were transformed into small commercial buildings (e.g. grocery shops, butchery and vegetable and fruit shops), limited service centres (e.g. travelling agencies, house dealers and beauty centre) or local clinics. All those facilities are equally distributed especially near main streets all over the city.

The findings ascertained that one of the purposes for material transformations in Lar's PEHs was to rehabilitate the identity of pre-earthquake architecture. This also was explained by Barenstein (2005) when mentioning that applied contractor-driven approaches in post-earthquake houses hinder the quality of materials used. However, since later transformations were conducted by people and local workers, normally they utilised more similar materials to what was used in the pre-earthquake houses. The results of the conducted systematic observation revealed that only 6.5% of PEHs (18 houses) were transformed using similar materials as the original house. Nevertheless, these changes were often caused by either changes in function or housing extension.

Alizadeh (2003) claimed that residents of PEHs usually alter the original façades since the original houses were considered as simple and ordinary. As two houses shared a single structure in the original house design, the desire to be different has resulted in various changes in façades. In most of the cases even façades of two houses which share a single structure differ from each other. These drastic changes in façades show that the future need for transformation in façades must be taken into account in the design of such houses. This may be done by either using an individual structure of façade for each house or flexible design in order to ease the work on future transformability. In terms of transformation in façades, 53.5% of PEHs undergo some transformations in façades, comprising changes in colour,

materials, volume and reconstruction of the whole façade. Most of these transformations with respect to façade occurred after 1990.

People's Motivations in Transforming Their PEHs in Lar

In order to investigate people's motivations, 190 questionnaires were distributed among the residents. As presented in Figure 4, based on the descriptive analysis of the findings, "*to adjust physical-living comfort*" and "*Growing household size*" were the most predominant motivations for transformations in Lar's PEHs. According to this figure, "*Increasing income*" and "*Thermal comfort considerations*" were found to have the least impact on people's decisions for transforming their PEHs in Lar.

A linear regression analysis was conducted in order to determine how much each motivational factor affected the formation of housing transformations in Lar's PEHs. Therefore, this study further traced the impacts of all sub-categories of PEH specifications in forming the category of socio-cultural considerations. Figure 5 illustrates the impact level of each sub-factor of PEHs specifications in forming transformation motivations. In this diagram, R^2 represents the impact level of each factor. The diagram shows that the impact of PEH specifications on formation of socio-cultural motivations for transformations is 8.5% ($R^2=0.084$). In other words, 8.5% of the model of socio-cultural motivations for transformations is determined by PEH specifications. Based on this result, the

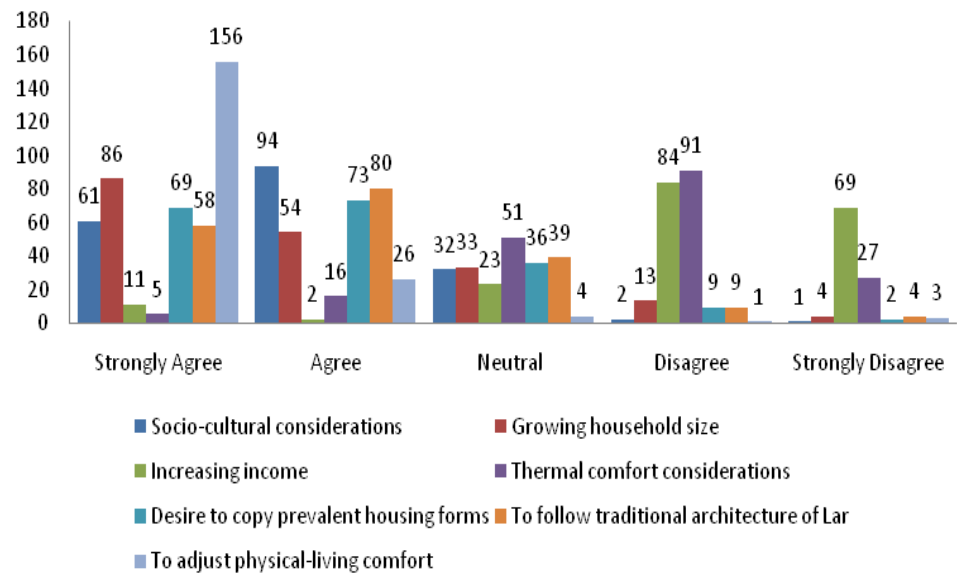


Fig. 4 Descriptive analysis of people’s motivations for transforming Lar’s PEHs.

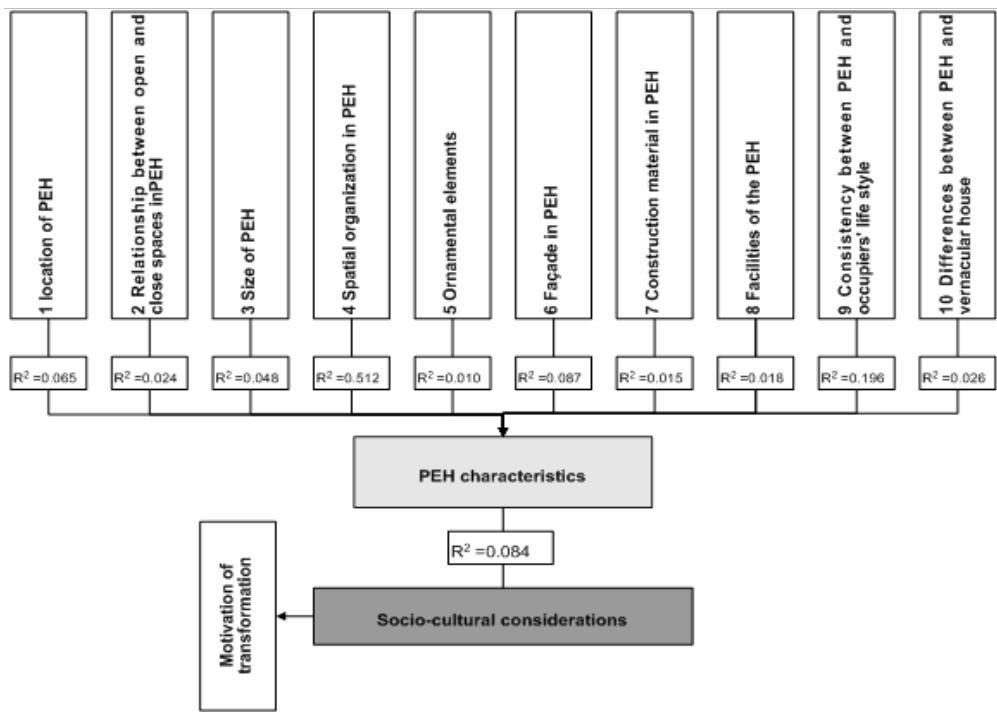


Fig. 5 Analysis of impacts of PEHs characteristics on emergence of motivations for PEH transformations.

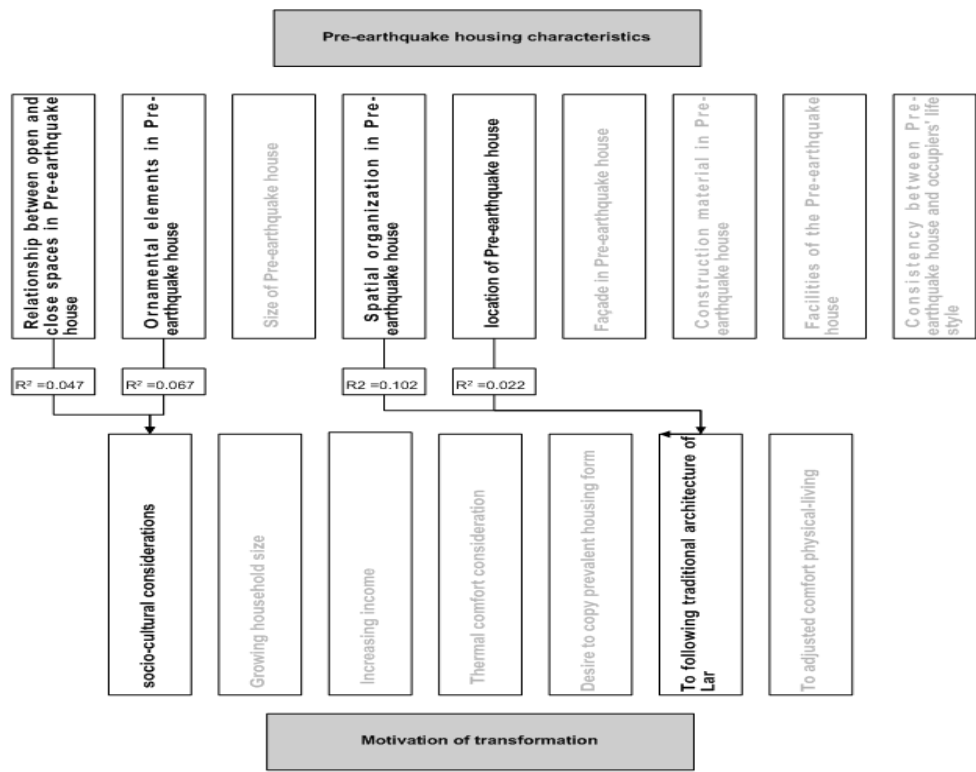


Fig. 6 Analysis of impacts of pre- and post-earthquake housing characteristics on forming the motivational model of housing transformations.

most influencing factor in forming PEH specifications was the quality of spatial planning ($R^2=0.512$) whilst the lowest impact in this formation belonged to the quality of ornamental elements (1%).

Figure 6 shows the results of the conducted linear regression test in order to analyse impacts of each factors on forming the motivational model of housing transformations. According to Figure 6, the model of motivations for housing transformations is independent from the specifications of PEHs and is only shaped by 4 out of 9 specifications of pre-earthquake houses. The results showed that of the 4 characteristics significantly influencing

the transformation, only two motivations received the highest score, namely, socio-cultural considerations and to follow Lar's traditional architecture.

The strongest motivation for Lar's post-earthquake housing transformations was the willingness to adjust physical-living comfort conditions to most occupants. This is evident from this research that Lar's PEHs were originally considered as '*not comfortable*'. At the same time, the least important motivation was to naturally improve thermal comfort conditions, notwithstanding the fact that Lar is located in the arid zone area of Iran. This could be justified by taking into account the fact that currently people in

Iran are being subsidised in terms of prices of electricity, so they show no attempt for replacing active thermal conditioning (air condition) systems with passive and energy-saving techniques (e.g. wind catcher).

The analysis in this study revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between the development of all transformational factors in Lar's PEHs and the people's four major transformational motivations which target socio-cultural considerations, increasing income, growing household size and rehabilitating the qualities of Lar's traditional architecture. It could be concluded from this finding that changing housing specifications in PEHs strongly skewed towards socio-cultural considerations. This could counter Alexander (1984) and Fallahi's (2007b) idea that preparing urgent shelter for victims should be the main policy in PEH construction. In other words, this study claims that since in a developing country like Iran, PEHs are considered semi-permanent residential units (rather than completely temporary shelter), socio-cultural considerations must be taken into account during the initial planning phase in order to prevent serious future problems.

Another important finding from this study explained the existing significant positive relationship between growth in household size and increase in motivation for PEH developments. Indeed, this finding verifies Habraken (1975) and Friedman's (2002) findings in which any changes in household size definitely is accompanied by changes in the house's physical size.

Parva and Rahimian (2014) categorised these types of issue into long-term and short-term developments. They ascertained that short-term transformations of Lar's PEHs are due to shortage of living spaces and the need to emulate previous living style, whilst long-term developments follow the normal conditions of normal housing transformation, that is, the growth in household size and the desire to follow current trends. This concurs with previous literature published on this matter (e.g. Hojrup, 2003; Salam, 2006; Shiferaw, 1998).

This study found significant relationship between spatial organisation in PEHs and socio-cultural motivations for transformations. Kashefy (1970) and Alizadeh (2003) asserted that sudden changes in PEHs may precede many socio-cultural problems for residents. It also verified Salam's (2006) idea that those inconsistencies in pre- and post-earthquake lifestyle may trigger motivations for transformations in PEHs. Finally, the study found a significant relationship between comprehensive changes in spatial organisation of PEHs and motivations for transformations. This study interprets that this was due to people's tendency for following the vernacular architecture of Lar, which can be considered as an instance of socio-cultural issues.

TABLE 1
Comparison Among Frequencies Of 5 Levels of Transformations in Lar

	Slight Adjustment	Addition and Division	Total Conversion	Reconstruction	Rebuilt
Number of PEHs	6	220	76	50	23
Percentage of PEH	1.6%	58%	20%	13.3%	6.1%

Influencing Factors on the Specifications of Post-Earthquake Housing Transformations

Socio-cultural issues in developing PEHs are frequently supported by the published literature (e.g. Barakat, 2003; Marcillia & Ohno, 2012; Tasa *et al.*, 2007) that asserted that rehabilitation of socio-cultural qualities should be taken into account in constructing and designing PEHs in the same degree of importance as for rehabilitation of the buildings. The results of this study also showed that socio-cultural issues are one strong motivator for transforming PEHs. It revealed that more than 8% of transformational motivation is rooted on socio-cultural issues ($R^2=0.084$). This is based on the idea that socio-cultural issues triggered by inconsistencies between pre- and post-earthquake housing led people to transforming their houses. The conducted factor analysis revealed that socio-cultural motivation and motivation for following traditional architecture of Lar follow the housing specifications of pre-earthquake houses in Lar. Moreover, among

all the mentioned motivation, two instances, namely “*adjusting relationship between open and close spaces in pre-earthquake houses* ($R^2=0.047$)” and “*re-applying ornamental elements of pre-earthquake houses* ($R^2=0.067$)” were found to be the most important factors in determining the model of socio-cultural motivation.

The study found that the quality of transformations in houses is dependent on the occupiers’ perceptions and preferences. Based on the results of this study, different motivation could cause a different transformation in PEHs. The study also revealed that changes in typology, built-up area, constructional materials and façades are mainly motivated by the desire to copy prevalent housing forms as shown in Al-Naim (2008) and Shiferaw’s (1998) studies. In addition, this study found that location also played an important role in determining house transformation, which influenced the transformation of function of PEHs. The results showed that this type of motivation appeared only when the houses were located beside the main roads for improving income

as the houses were transformed to serve as shops. The study revealed that the utilised materials in constructing initial PEHs were adjusted neither to conform with traditional housing of Lar nor with the prevailing architecture of the region (Housing Planning Department, 2001).

Façade transformations are often guided by the patterns of the current prevailing architectural style of the region. However, according to the results of this study, façade changes in Lar were guided by the motivation to follow the traditional architecture of Lar as well as the motivation to model the prevalent housing style. This was an interesting finding as during the early stages of development of PEHs, people were attached to their memories from their previous lifestyle and during the early period, transformations were attempts to emulate previous pre-earthquake houses. It was only in the later periods (1980s onwards) that the need to copy prevalent architecture style was seen as prevalent. This paper argues that this is because of the historical value of architecture and culture in central parts of Iran.

Phases and Types of Transformation

The results of the systematic observations indicated that most of the cases in Lar's post-earthquake houses have undergone the "Addition and Division" type of transformation, whilst only a few cases comprise the "Slight Adjustment" type. This can be explained by Arsalan's (2007) theory which asserted that sustainable transformation is possible only when

the transformations do not entail full demolition of the post-earthquake houses. In addition, according to the systematic observations, the appropriate location of construction on the land was the main support for preventing demolition. This small number of "Slight Adjustments" could be considered as evidence of the need for transformations in PEHs, even slightly. In other words, it could indicate these original houses were usually not acceptable by residents without any transformation.

The current characteristics of PEHs are highly dependent on the qualities of both the original PEHs and the later transformations. Thereby, this study thoroughly investigated the quality of transformations in Lar's PEHs. The results of the conducted systematic observations revealed that 98.9% of PEHs were transformed between 1962 and 2008, and all instances of transformation were made by the residents. This study classified the instances of housing transformation in Lar's PEHs into five categories: Slight Adjustments, Addition and Division, Total Conversion, Reconstruction and Rebuilt according to Mahmud's (2007) categorisation. As presented in Table 1, the majority of instances of transformation in Lar's PEHs were classed as Addition and Division, and there was little evidence of Slight Adjustment and Rebuilt. This shows that the original house structure in Lar city was often retained (not totally demolished) but was given additions or add-ons whilst their specifications were significantly changed in order to address the minimum requirements of the residents.

CONCLUSION

Post-earthquake shelter is usually not acceptable to occupants due to many factors. Unlike in normal situations, the tendency towards rehabilitation of the previous lifestyle is an important issue for disaster victims. In addition, occupants usually need to transform initial temporary shelter in order to become more comfortable and useable for permanent occupancy purposes. This study analysed the process of housing transformation in four areas: architectural characteristics of post-earthquake housing transformation, people's motivations in transforming their PEH, influencing factors on the specifications of post-earthquake housing transformations and phases types of transformation. This study found that "to adjust physical-living comfort" was the strongest motivation during the early occupancy period followed by "growing household size" as the most dominant motivation for transformation in Lar's PEHs. The study posits that leveraging transformability in PEHs could promote temporary houses into permanent homes in post-earthquake areas without much waste. The results revealed "socio-cultural" aspect as the strongest influencing factor in transforming a house in PEH in Lar, Iran, as the majority of house transformation includes a courtyard according to the vernacular house design. The majority of houses had undergone major transformation as reported in the findings. This study found that the original house structure was retained in most cases but changes, especially the façade, had caused difficulties

for transformation, and proposes that house design should be flexible enough to assist future changes or transformation. In terms of reconstruction of PEHs, planners and designers should consider vernacular architecture in the initial housing plan, and the design should have the capacity for future transformations.

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Conceptualising Malaysian Labour Law Syllabus Through Economic Analysis of Law: A Trans-disciplinary Approach

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author explains the concept of economic analysis of law in understanding labour law. The emphasis is on the philosophical and theoretical aspects of labour law through the economic analysis of law perspective. Study of labour law in law schools has always been based on a purely legal method or perspective, with an instruction approach focused on statutes and case-law and with reference to a theoretical legal framework. However, labour law is a subject with multi-dimensional roots and facets consisting of components of sociology, economics, politics, religion and management disciplines. In this paper, the author will introduce a method, the trans-disciplinary approach, that is relevant to understanding the working of Malaysian labour law and that uses an economic analysis of law perspective. The enactment of legislation is to a large extent propelled by economic demand, which is apparent in labour law. The methodology used for discussion of this paper is 'legal analysis'. This new approach will not change the entire method of teaching conventional labour law. The introduction of this new approach will only comprise 30% of the current conventional labour law syllabus at Master level. Understanding the concept of economic analysis of law will enhance students' knowledge for future study of labour law and economics.

Keywords: labour law, Malaysia, economic analysis of law, Common Law, *Shari'ah*

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INTRODUCTION

The study of labour law at law schools has always been based on a purely legal method or perspective (Kamal Halili, 2002). Methods of teaching this subject have always been conventional, as they are based on statutes and case law with reference to

theoretical legal frameworks. The reason for adopting this conventional method is that the curriculum prepares law students for the legal profession as judges, advocates or solicitors. Case adjudication and preparation, even during client consultation, is usually based on 'black letter law'. Lawyers are invariably consulted in cases of broken employer-employee relationships by parties seeking possible remedies. However, labour law is a subject that encompasses many dimensions, and in order to understand and appreciate the real workings of labour law, one cannot focus only on the legal perspective (Collins, 2003). Labour law has multi-dimensional roots and facets, including components of sociology, economics, politics, religion and management science disciplines, but it is the economic perspective that establishes the strongest theoretical framework (Davies, 2004).

In this paper, the author will argue that the teaching of labour law needs to be enhanced by enlarging its scope. Students require an inter-disciplinary approach to learning labour law that imports other disciplines, including economics, to explain the content of labour law. Labour law as currently taught is basically an explanation of legal provisions and judicial cases, and the approach of focusing on black letter law has dominated legal curricula for decades. Attempts to teach beyond the purview of black letter law have met with little success largely because labour law teachers were themselves educated through a linear legal education. Indeed, it would be a challenge for law teachers

to go beyond the conventional method, but the current job market that requires graduates to master multi-dimensional skills necessitates this inter-disciplinary approach. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to overhaul the conventional method of teaching labour law, which is in fact useful for future lawyers. It is actually to give another insight and dimension to the study of labour law, viewing it from the economic analysis of law perspective (Leff, 1974; Shavell, 2004). Much in the literature has been written on this subject, as Hsiung (2006) in "*The economic analysis of law: An inquiry of its underlying logic*" has remarked that, "the thriving field of *law and economics* is a success story of inter-disciplinary research. Both law journals and economic journals have been publishing an increasing number of papers in the area of law and economics." Cooter and Allen (2003) in Law and economics explained that, "Law and economics has become a central organizing philosophy in U.S. legal education. ... economic analysis tools for law students and legal analysis tools for economics students, uniquely... offer a combination of clear theoretical analysis supported by practical application. Economic theories in four core areas of the law are used to explain and analyze topics, illustrating how microeconomic theory can be used to increase understanding of the law and improve public policy."

In this paper, the author will introduce a method that is relevant to understanding the workings of labour law using an economic analysis of law perspective, as opposed

to the perspective that has typically been used in legal analysis. Several publications have discussed economic analysis of law in general, but few have focused on labour law, the best of which are by Davies (2004) and Posner (1998).

METHODOLOGY

This study primarily used the qualitative method. The approach adopted was a critical analysis of a current situation or documentary evidence. Doctrinal research refers to a new, thorough, systematic, investigative or theoretical analysis. Its aim is to explore, revise, add value and improve the concept, theory, principles and application of the law. Using the *content analysis technique*, this research aims to resolve problematic situations and identify elements that constitute such problems and the regulations that are contained in each problem. For this research, the author adopted a theoretical analysis of current situation i.e. using a syllabus of a law programme, namely, of labour law, taught at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and enhancing it by analysing some aspect of labour matters from the economic analysis of law perspective. The author chose the LLM labour law course as a sample study. It is admitted that there are differences in the approach adopted in teaching labour law in other universities but it is argued that the gist of the labour law syllabus at different universities is the same. Thus, the author submits that the sample study (UKM) adopted in this article

sufficiently represented the problems to be addressed and the new idea to be proposed. Data collection in legal research relies on primary and secondary data. In legal research, primary data refer to legislation, parliamentary *hansards* and court cases from Malaysia and foreign countries. Secondary source refers to publication such as articles' journals, books, students' thesis and documents, official or otherwise. The primary data were analysed based on rules of interpretation such as literal, golden, mischief and purposive rules. Finally, all data collected was analysed using four legal research methods, namely: historical, jurisprudential, comparative and analytical and critical method. This method is also called content *legal analysis*, and is not based on coding as usually done in other social science or economic research. This legal technique of data collection was mostly made in the library, on-line and government departments and visits to some countries which had good and effective regulations and enforcement. For this research, the author only adopted a theoretical analysis on the concept of labour law from the economic analysis of law perspective. A short questionnaire was also sent to students of the LLM Labour law class Semester 2, Session 2012-2013. The primary purpose of the survey was to identify the preference (or otherwise) among students for the idea of using the disciplinary approach in the learning of labour law at law schools, in particular, UKM.

Syllabus of Labour Law

The scope of labour law taught at the Master level at UKM Law Faculty encompasses employment, industrial relations and industrial safety law. These three broad categories are well-known components of labour law, although some textbooks use the terms interchangeably. Employment law regulates the relationship between the employer and individual employees, with the main binding instrument being a contract of service that regulates terms and conditions (Selwyn, 1993). In this context, parties are bound under the realm of freedom of contract. Theoretically, the freedom of contract represents the nature of the employment relationship, but in reality, employees and subordinates submit to employers; this subordination is concealed in the legal fiction of 'contract of service' (Collins, 2003). The presence of such submission and subordination means that there is no equal bargaining power; to correct such imbalances, Parliament intervenes by introducing labour legislation that provides basic rights for labour (Wedderburn, 1994). This is a legal perspective. If the existence of the contract of service is based on employees' individual strength, industrial relations law provides and recognises the collective strength of workers when facing their employers (Smith & Woods, 2000; Kamal & Rose, 2003). In industrial relations law, the focus is on the laws regarding trade unions, collective bargaining, trade disputes and dispute resolution (Aun, 1995). This is also a legal perspective.

The other category of labour law, although considered a distinct subject by some academics, is industrial safety law (Kamal Halili, 2001; Barret & Howells, 2000). This category has gained significance due to the increasing number of accidents that occur in the workplace. Industrial safety law can be examined in the context of employment law with reference to the implied obligations of employers to provide a safe work environment under a contract of service (Deakin & Morris, 1998). However, with the increasing number of statutes enacted for industrial safety, breach of occupational safety is now viewed as a statutory breach of duty by the employer. The social security scheme, which in Malaysia is managed by the Employees' Social Security Organisation (SOCSO), is relevant to industrial safety law, as it manages benefits claims by local employees. For foreign workers, claims for employment injury fall under the Workmen Compensation Act 1952. This is also an examination of labour law from the legal perspective. A study of labour law from the economic analysis of law perspective is relevant in inter-disciplinary study. The narrative that follows explains the concept of economic analysis of labour law, with an emphasis on micro- and macroeconomics. It ought to be noted that *Shari'ah* law has gained a significant milestone as a subject taught in Malaysian law schools. Law faculties at institutions such as International Islamic University Malaysia, Islamic Science University Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia have introduced

and implemented *Syari'ah* courses in their law programmes. Teaching of labour law also includes the *Shari'ah* perspective. Thus, it is appropriate in this article to include a discussion of labour law from the *Shari'ah* perspective. *Shari'ah* takes into consideration matters of law and economics in its framework.

Economic Analysis of Labour Law

Labour legislation is enacted only after the economic factors justifying a particular labour issue are settled (Cootle & Allen, 2004). A current example is minimum wage legislation. Economic calculations to determine the acceptable amount for a minimum wage will have to be performed before a statute is introduced. In other words, the economic factor is the propeller, while the legislation is the enforcer. This situation is especially true in microeconomics, where the individual contractual relationship between employer and employee is very much dependent on supply and demand (Davies, 2004). Economic analysis of labour law is also viewed from the perspective of the impact of labour law on the labour market or country (Coleman, 1988). For instance, the macroeconomic analysis is focused on the effect of labour law on patterns of unemployment and productivity. Understanding economic considerations is instructive in understanding why a particular legislation or legal provision is enacted (Deakin & Wilkinson, 2000). Although the enactment of a law is not necessarily wholly driven by economics, as the political struggles of unions also contribute,

economists contribute considerably to the adoption of labour policies, as the success of labour regulations is ultimately dependent on market acceptability (Deakin & Wilkinson, 1994).

Thus, it is crucial to examine economists' role in shaping labour policy. We can divide economists into two categories: positive and normative economists. 'Positive' economists produce theoretical models that predict how people will behave, assuming certain facts and using empirical evidence to verify their assumptions (Davies, 2004; Friedman, 1953), while normative economists use data to produce policy recommendations. Legal drafters then take over the role of the normative economists when drafting labour legislation. Economists assume that workers make rational choices between maximising wealth through working hard to obtain a higher salary and maximising utility by enjoying more of their leisure time. Economists believe that people's preferences remain stable over time (Simon, 1986).

Economists believe that these assumptions reflect the real-world situation: although people's behaviour towards economic factors changes according to a particular environment or crisis, over time, the assumption that people's choices remain stable still holds. Economists utilise such assumptions by building theoretical models. Davies (2004), referring to Becker (1976), said that "without the assumption that people behave rationally, it would be impossible to predict how people would respond to changes in economic conditions."

However, the economic normative theory is what contributes to the enactment of legislation. The policymaker has to pay close attention to the assumptions made by economists so that the policy, which is later grafted into legislation, reflects market demands. Economic theory is divided into two broad categories: microeconomics and macroeconomics.

Microeconomics

In microeconomics, the market brings together the seller and the buyer, who eventually determine prices. In theory, the 'invisible hand' of the market will drive the seller and buyer to an 'equilibrium' or 'market-clearing' price (Davies, 2004). The same theory applies to the labour market. The employer and employee meet in the labour market with competing interests. The employer will first decide on the size of the labour force that he needs based on considerations of cost and expected production. He considers all factors in order to achieve maximum profit.

The cost/benefit factor is the primary driving force for the business operation of an entrepreneur/employer. Employees, on the other hand, enter the labour market with certain expectations. Wages are the primary consideration, but there are other factors that are considered, such as job security, distance between place of work and residence and occupational safety. Meeting both the employer and employee's expectations in the labour market determines the price of labour (for example, wages). Minimum wage regulations, although considered

a legal intervention, are not introduced in a vacuum; these regulations will not work effectively without prior economic consideration.

The enforcement of safety law in the workplace is another example. Although the law specifies that the employer has a duty to ensure safety in the workplace, this duty is qualified: several factors have to be taken into account such as cost to prove that the employer has discharged his duty 'as far as practicable'. The employer is not expected to incur huge expenditures to overcome a minimal risk. This is more of an economic consideration than a matter of legal interpretation.

Labour markets: theory of supply and demand. Labour economists conceptualise labour markets using the theory of supply and demand (Davis, 2004; Simon, 1986; Becker, 1976; Deakin & Wilkinson, 1994). In order to determine the price of labour, economic theories begin with the premise that workers offer their services for sale and that firms act as buyers. The theory of supply and demand determines the actual number of workers required by the employers. The price of labour, that is, the amount of wages, is similarly determined, and the employer will not pay wages beyond his financial capability. The whole cost of workers' wages is also determined by the total of the employer's human resources. However, the supply of labour is not determined solely by wages, as workers do not simply offer their services without considering other factors such as job security, workplace safety and

distance. Workers' decisions are closely tied to their behaviour as consumers (Davies, 2004; Williamson, 1979).

Employers also have their preferences in employing workers; however, cost remains the primary consideration because employers are unlikely to differentiate between the costs of labour and machinery or raw materials. Employers are also able to go around the law by reducing labour costs by, for example, hiring foreign workers who are willing to be paid lower wages. Parliament then intervenes by introducing minimum wage legislation to prevent employers from solely acting on economic considerations. The costs of labour are eventually determined by decisions made by both parties: the employer and the worker (Simon, 1986). The worker selects a combination of preferences in terms of his work or leisure: some people prefer to work longer hours than is typical, while others prefer to have more time for leisure. This preference may change, but economists assume that it remains stable over time (Deakin & Wilkinson, 1994).

Impact of labour law on the labour market. Economists disagree about the impacts of different aspects of labour law on the labour market (Simon, 1986). Two schools of thought have emerged from this debate: 'neo-classical' and 'new institutional'. The neo-classical camp is hostile to legal intervention, while the new institutional advocates support labour law intervention, believing that it eventually benefits workers (Epstein, 1984). The

neo-classical camp believes that employer-employee relationships should be left to develop on their own without any legal intervention; market forces and freedom of contract should reign supreme. This theory is centred on the belief that the labour market is able to find its own equilibrium, and employers should be allowed to run their business as they feel fit. These advocates feel that legal intervention will cause problems by limiting options and adding costs.

Meanwhile, new institutional advocates argue that workers are the weaker party in employment negotiations and thus unable to fend for themselves. For new institutional advocates, the freedom of contract is just a nice-sounding theory because in practice, workers are handicapped, as they are pressured to enter the labour market by economic necessity rather than being able to argue about rights (Williamson, 1979). Because the unequal bargaining power between employer and employee makes a mockery of freedom of contract and as a consequence employees are susceptible to exploitation, legislation needs to be enacted to protect workers. Legal intervention in the form of labour legislation provides basic or minimum rights to workers such as minimum wage, hours of work, time off and overtime payment. However, legal intervention in the labour market is not absolute, and to a certain extent, freedom of contract is still maintained. International and national laws do not intervene, as employers are only required to observe minimum standards. Employers have the option of providing better terms and conditions to

their workers. However, neo-classical theorists still argue that even legislation with minimal provisions hinders employers' freedom to run their businesses.

Macroeconomics

Macroeconomics provides a bigger perspective. Macroeconomists consider the impact of labour law, especially its amendment, on an industry or country as a whole (Wedderburn, 1994). Its concern is with productivity and unemployment. Productivity can be explained from a purely economic perspective measured by dividing input and output. If the output is equal to input, then productivity is considered to be level. If output exceeds input, then productivity is good; by the same calculation, if output is less than input, then productivity is low. Rising productivity is a sign of a healthy economy. When there is high productivity, firms will hire more workers and workers can demand better salaries. One strategy to increase productivity is using education and training. The law can play a role by making it compulsory for employers to send their employees for training or requiring certain categories of employees, for example, safety officers, to obtain prerequisite qualifications.

The effects of labour law on productivity can also be seen in unfair dismissal law (Davies, 2004). Neo-classical theorists argue that employers should be allowed to dismiss workers 'at will', based on the premise that employers know what is best for their firms; they know how to increase productivity by either reducing their human

resources or dismissing under-performing workers. Workers will perform better if the threat of dismissal constantly hangs over them. The integrity of dismissal law, to the neo-classical theorist, is a hindrance to the efficiency of organisational management. By contrast, the new institutional advocates maintain strong support for unfair dismissal law, arguing that job security propels workers to perform and increase their productivity; workers will be more productive if they feel secure about their jobs.

The effect of labour law is also analysed for the purpose of measuring unemployment. Many neo-classical economists believe that as labour law increases the costs of productivity, it also increases unemployment. Legal intervention is thus financially burdensome, as it limits the possibility of higher productivity. For example, having regulated hours of work results in output being curtailed and, consequently, productivity dropping. This drop results in the employer either not employing new workers or dismissing some current employees, eventually causing unemployment.

Shari'ah Approach

Conceptualising labour law from the *Shari'ah* can also be made from the economic analysis of law perspective. The *Shari'ah* approach or perspective may be adopted in teaching labour law. Teaching of labour law through *Shari'ah* perspective is by using sources which are Islamic based such as the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, *Qiyas* and *Ijma'*. These sources differ from the common law method

that relies heavily on legislation and case-law. In Islam, apart from the original sources such as the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, the opinion and explanation of jurists is highly regarded and has strong persuasive authority. In Islamic teaching, if the sources are clear they should first be resorted to. In this context, the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* have many principles and guidelines on employment relationship. The verses of the *Qur'an* as well as the *Hadith* of the Prophet outline many duties, rights and obligations on employers and employees. Authors have written quite a number of articles on the employment relationship in the Islamic context. For example, Kamal Halili (2012) discussed the concept of contractualism in employment relationship from both the common law and *Shari'ah* perspectives. He explained that there was a strong foundation of Islamic principles supporting the existence of a contract of service (*Ijarah*) in Islam. In teaching employment law from the Islamic perspective, this concept of Islamic contract of service must first be introduced as such a contract is the instrument that binds parties i.e the employer and employee. The terminology used in Islam such as *musta'jir* (employer), *ajir* (employee) connote parties to the contract of service. Islam recognises the existence of the employer-employee relationship as a *fitrah* in human relations where an element of command and control exists in the strata of working society: Allah SWT says: "It is we who divide among their livelihood in the life of this world, and We exalt some of them above others in rank, so that some may command work from the

others" (*Qur'an*, 43:32). This verse can be accepted as proof of contractual employment relations, which is a fundamental concept in the study of labour law.

An employment relationship is not only about command and control; it is more akin to brotherhood. In the study of employment law similar to Common law, Islam also emphasises on the philosophical of right; where Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. said, "your brethren whom Allah has placed on your custody; let him who has made custodian of his brother by Allah feed him from what he himself eats, clothe him out of what he clothes himself, and impose not on him work that will overcome him" (*Sahih Bukhari*). This *Hadith* discusses the notion of equality, fairness and compassion. Economic as well as human perspectives exist in Islamic labour law as proven in the narration by Anaas, who served the Prophet S.A.W., when he said, "the prophet never paid a low wage to a person. One of the three persons that will argue against us on the day of judgment is a man who engaged a labourer and enjoyed full benefit from him, yet did not pay him (his due) wages" (*Sahih Bukhari*). The Prophet SAW said, "pay the labourer his wages before his sweat dries" (as narrated by Abu Daud). Wages is an important component in the study of labour law and the above *Hadith* is a good example. In compassion, the worker should not be given a task beyond his physical capabilities. The holy Prophet S.A.W. said, "a slave should have normal food and clothing, and he is obliged to do such work as he is capable of doing" (Imam Malik, al-

Mawatta'). Good treatment must be given to employees. These verses refer to implied obligations of parties which are a component of employment right and underlie the economic perspective of labour law in Islam. The mechanism on employment dispute resolution is also outlined in the Islamic sources. Dispute resolution is an important component in the study of labour law, and Islam provides effective mechanisms for such resolution. *Sulh* and *Tahkim* are well-known mechanisms in Islam and they are indeed comparable with the resolution mechanism provided by common law (Kamal Halili, 2006, 2012).

As mentioned above, Islamic labour law may also be viewed from the economic perspective (apart from the human rights perspective). The economic perspective, as in other modern life activities, is clearly permissible by applying the *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* principle. This principle is a methodology that has been well established in the study of Islamic law especially in the context of modern knowledge and discourse (Jackman, 2006; Hallaq, 2006; Safi, 2006). Al-Ghazali, the well-known Islamic jurist, introduced the *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* principle followed by Imam Shayuti (Raysuni, 2006; Jasser, 2010). One also cannot deny the contribution made by Ibn Ashur in the explanation of this classic principle (Jackman, 2006). The *Shari'ah* purposes can be divided into two main categories, namely bliss and welfare in this world, and in the world hereafter. In order to attain bliss in this world, according to these latter scholars, it

is necessary to abide by the essentials of life (*daruriyah*), the complementary (*Hajiyyat*) and the embellishment (*tahsiniyyat*) (Jasser, 2010). There are five tenets of the *Maqasid* principle which human beings strive for in their life and the hereafter. Firstly, the human self (*Nafs*), which is vital to people in the pursuit of their daily life, materially or otherwise. Secondly, the intellect (*Aql*), which is interpreted as a gift from *Allah* to human beings because it is an important feature that distinguishes humans from animals. Thirdly, posterity or dignity or lineage (*Nasl/ al Ird*), which for everyone in the world, is one of the fundamental requirements of life. Fourthly, faith (*Din*), as Islam has always obliged Muslims to protect their faith through the performance of such Islamic activities as *Ibadah* (praying, fasting) *Hajj* and *Zakat*. Fifthly, wealth (*Mal*); since everyone in society owns property, and property needs to have security, Islam does not allow anyone to interfere with the property of other people without an agreement or other legitimate reasons. The fifth concept of *Maqasid* as propounded by al Ghazali, that is the creation of wealth (*Maqasid*) for the purpose of attaining property and security, is also the objective of labour law. In fact, if one were to look closely at the other tenets in the *Maqasid* principles such as *Aql*, *Masl*, *Din* and *Ibadah*, one would find that they are in tandem with the purpose of labour law, which aims to protect rights and obligations of parties. Work is not only a worldly affair but also an *Ibadah* where employer and employee are answerable for

all their deeds and actions while employing or working. Based on this methodology, we can argue that teaching labour law using the Islamic approach is relevant in the context of Malaysian law schools.

Malaysian Labour Law

Interestingly, Malaysian labour law reflects the same tension as seen in the neo-classical and new institutional debate, and Malaysian labour law contains both theories. On the one hand, it recognises freedom of contract so that employer and employee are free to enter into a contract of service and determine its terms and conditions. Under neo-classical theory, an employer enjoys prerogatives to organise its business, including the privilege to choose its employees' form of contract. On the other hand, legal intervention is also common in Malaysia. The Employment Act (EA) 1955 is a good example of legal intervention in the Malaysian labour market (Kamal Halili *et al*, 2007; Kamal Halili & Rozanah, 2009; Siti Zaharah, 2000; Siti Zaharah, 2011). The EA 1955 regulates hours of work, rest days, holidays, annual leave, sick leave and maternity leave. It also has several provisions for foreign workers (Anantaraman, 1997). The EA 1955 ensures that employers do not go below certain standards (Ayadurai, 1992).

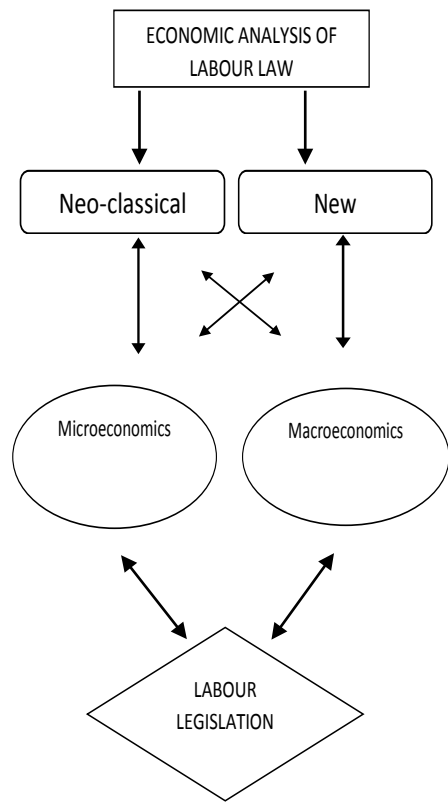
In addition, the Malaysian Parliament promulgated a new legislation, the National Wages Consultative Council Act 2011, which is applicable throughout Malaysia. By virtue of the Act, the Ministry of Human Resources enacted the Minimum Wages Order 2012, which came into force in January 2013

but was later delayed in implementation to 1 January, 2014. Paragraph 4 of the Order makes it mandatory for employers to pay minimum wages of RM900 per month (RM4.33 per hour) for employees in Peninsular Malaysia and RM800 (RM3.85 per hour) for employees in Sabah, Sarawak and the Federal Territory of Labuan. It covers both local and foreign workers except for domestic helpers and gardeners.

It will be interesting to see the actual effect of the Act on labour markets now, after its implementation. Will there be many violations committed by employers, or will employers reduce their workforce to overcome the strain of paying higher salaries? These are the questions that will arise in upcoming years. Although legislation is enacted with the intention of protecting workers, the lack of enforcement or employers 'innovating' ways in evading the law will render legal intervention in the labour market ineffective. The 2012 Act represents an interesting example of a legal instrument as economic forces and factors had influenced its enactment. Before the Act was enacted, the Employers' Federation objected to its enactment while the Trade Unions of Workers (especially the Malaysian Trade Union Congress) supported it. Finally, the Malaysian Government decided to enact minimum wages for workers employed in the private sector.

The Parliament also legislated the Retirement Age 2012 for employees of the private sector. It is submitted that the enactment of the Act was propelled by economic factors. The Malaysian Deputy

Diagram 1



Minister of Human Resources was quoted as saying in Parliament that “there will be no compromise with employers on the Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012.” The Act helps to increase the workers’ total saving in the Employees’ Provident Fund Act (EPF). He said that 14% of retirees exhaust their EPF savings within 3 years, 5% of retirees exhaust their EPF savings within 5 years and 70% of retirees exhaust their EPF savings within 10 years (Bernama 2014).

Economic analysis of law (Diagram 1) is an interesting option for teaching

labour law in Malaysian law schools. This method of teaching and analysis should be adopted, especially at the post-graduate level. Furthermore, such knowledge is useful for legal research, either at the doctor of philosophy level or among labour law scholars. The methods of teaching of labour law (which include explaining the concept of economic analysis of labour law) are as follows:

- First stage – students are taught the basic of Malaysian labour law: definitions, various legislations, sources, history and the courts.

- Second stage – students are taught the philosophy of labour law with emphasis on economic right and political and civil rights. The concept of economic analysis of law such as macroeconomics and microeconomics is introduced to students, including the *Shari'ah* perspective.
- Third stage – students are taught employment law from the economic-legal perspective of various employees' rights as provided for in legislation (for example, the Employment Act 1955 on economic rights such as wages, leaves, overtime etc.).
- Fourth stage – students are taught the concept of dismissal from economic-legal analysis.
- Final stage – students are taught issues of industrial dispute resolution with emphasis on the economic benefit of dispute resolution. Discussion is made on the best option, from the economic point of view, of dispute resolution between Alternative Dispute Resolution and court litigation.

These are, however, not specific recommendations. The author merely outlines the steps that need to be taken. Each university may have their own approach in the new method of teaching labour law using trans-disciplinary methodology. It is argued that the recommendation is viable for undertaking at the postgraduate level teaching.

Preferences and Knowledge of Students – A Survey

The author carried out a survey among his Master's degree programme (LLM) students in labour law class (18 respondents), principally to measure their preferences (or otherwise) on the suggestion of the cross-disciplinary approach in the study of labour law. Demography of the respondents is as follows:

1. Student status: part-time (18); full-time (0).
2. Age: <20 (0); 21-25 (8); 26-30 (4); 30-35 (3); >36 (3).
3. Sex: Male (2); Female (16).
4. Occupation: Public sector (5); Private sector (3); Self-employed (0); Others (10)
5. Have attended labour law course: Yes (8); No (10).
6. Experience in managing human resources: Yes (4); No (14).

A *Likert* scale of 1 to 5 was used for the other questions.

- 1: do not agree at all
- 2: do not agree
- 3: not sure
4. agree
5. very much agree

The questions and the responses by the respondents are as follows: (The number in bracket is the total responses of the respondents)

- a. Prefer that labour law course be taught legalistically: 1 (2); 2 (11); 3 (2); 4 (2); 5 (1).

- b. Teaching of labour law in multi- or cross-disciplinary approach involves economic, management, religion and sociology: 1 (0); 2 (0); 3 (2); 4 (12); 5 (4).
- c. Labour law course needs to be taught using multi- or cross-disciplinary approach: 1 (0); 2 (1); 3 (0); 4 (13); 5 (4).
- d. Labour law course needs to be taught from economic perspective: 1 (0); 2 (1); 3 (1); 4 (11); 5 (5).
- e. Labour law course needs to be taught from religious perspective: 1 (0); 2 (0); 3 (2); 4 (9); 5 (7).
- f. I understand the teaching of labour law using multi or cross disciplinary approach: 1 (0); 2 (0); 3 (6); 4 (10); 5 (2).
- g. All problems at the workplace can be solved legally: 1 (0); 2 (4); 3 (4); 4 (10); 5 (0).
- h. International labour law needs to be taught: 1 (0); 2 (0); 3 (0); 4 (5); 5 (13).

Analysis

All the respondents (100%) were full-timers, indicating that they were working or under training, which shows their understanding and experience regarding situations at the workplaces. Age was quite well-balanced, representing maturity of the respondents; however, 67% were below 30 years old. Female students (89%) dominated the class. Respondents working in the public

sector (28%) were slightly more than those working in the private sector. The working status of the majority of them was unknown; perhaps they were doing training or were jobless. Their background knowledge of labour law was quite balanced, as almost half of them (44%) had attended a law course. But the majority of them (78%) had no knowledge of management of human resources. On the question whether labour law needed to be taught legalistically, the majority (72%) did not agree. In terms of their understanding of the meaning and concept of cross-disciplinary labour law, the majority understood it (89%). The author found the next question important to this survey: on whether the labour law course needed to be taught using multi- or cross-disciplinary approach, the majority (94%) agreed. To emphasise the question, the author asked almost the same question but rather narrowly (on economic and religious perspectives). The answer was still in the affirmative with the majority (89% and 89%, respectively) agreeing with the adoption of such an approach. The author had used the cross-disciplinary approach in his class but only on a small scale to test if students would understand it. Based on the survey, the majority of the respondents understood what was taught although some were not sure. On the question whether all problems at the workplace could be solved legally, 56% agreed that it could not. Finally, all of the respondents (100%) agreed that international labour law should be taught in this Master's level programme.

CONCLUSION

Currently, the teaching of labour law in law schools is based on a purely legal method or perspective based on statutes and case law. Thus, a trans-disciplinary approach based on a sound economic-legal theoretical framework needs to be adopted. Labour law has multidimensional roots and facets consisting of components of sociology, economics, politics, religion and management science disciplines, which should be reflected in the study of labour law, but the economic perspective establishes the strongest theoretical framework. A clear module based on such an inter-disciplinary approach needs to be introduced into the study of labour law, both from the national and international perspectives (Betten, 1993; Valticos & Potobsky, 1995). This article is a preliminary study on the economic analysis law of labour law in the Malaysian context with emphasis on its theoretical and philosophical aspects.

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Modelling Neighbourhood Satisfaction Of Residents In High-And Medium-Density Neighbourhoods Of Lagos City, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Using a structural equation model (SEM) and multiple linear regression (MLR), the factors influencing residents' satisfaction in high and medium density neighbourhoods of Lagos metropolitan city, Nigeria were examined. This study takes a different approach by categorizing the factors into four domains (social environment, transportation, environmental quality, facilities). A total of 239 respondents from low-income high density and 220 from medium-income medium density neighbourhoods of the city were randomly selected. The main objective of the study was to identify the predictors of neighbourhood satisfaction among the residents of the two neighbourhoods. The results showed that a significant relationship exists between the four domains and neighbourhood satisfaction of the residents. However, the model results showed some variations in the predicting power of each of the domain. The social environment ($X^2 = 7.029$, $p = 0.218$, $GFI = 0.994$, $AGFI = 0.982$, $RMSEA = 0.030$, $df = 5$, $N = 450$) had more influence on residents neighbourhood satisfaction compared to other domains. Other variables found to have significantly influenced neighbourhood satisfaction in the other domains were drainage ($\beta = 0.29$), waste management ($\beta = 0.24$), street lighting, ($\beta = 0.23$) and noise pollution ($\beta = 0.22$). The finding of the study substantiates the importance of social and physical environment factors on the well-being of urban residents in developing countries.

Keywords: neighbourhood satisfaction, structural equation model, Lagos, physical environment, social environment

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INTRODUCTION

Residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood is thought to be governed by a wide range of factors including both social

and physical attributes of the environment (Oktay *et al.* 2009; Corrado *et al.* 2011). Research into both physical and social characteristics of neighbourhoods shows contradictory effects on neighbourhood satisfaction (Hur & Morrow-Jones, 2008). Studies have found that physical characteristics have strong influence on neighbourhood satisfaction compared to social or economic characteristics (Kaplan, 1985; Langdon, 1988; Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002). Hur and Morrow-Jones (2008) noted that the importance of physical characteristics of a neighbourhood is not always supported by research and that the value attached to the physical characteristics of a neighbourhood depends on the respondent's background. Though planners place more emphasis on the physical characteristics, residents consider social factors more important in evaluating a neighbourhood (Lansing & Marans, 1969). Individuals who have friends and family close by are likely to be happier (Parkes *et al.*, 2002), while low education is sometimes associated with greater dissatisfaction (Miller *et al.*, 1980; Spain, 1988; Lu, 1999). Satisfaction is a feeling that is somewhat difficult to measure, which is one reason why we often see contradictory responses from the subjects and it arises from a mixed set of evaluations (Hur & Morrow-Jones, 2008). According to Mesch and Manor (1998), satisfaction is the evaluation of features of the physical and social environment. While this definition may sound very simple, measuring or evaluating residents' perceived satisfaction with their physical and social

environment is somewhat difficult because of the number of variables involved and the different scales used by researchers.

The objective of this study was to gain more insight into the factors that influenced residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood in Lagos metropolitan city, Nigeria. Hence, we hypothesised that positive evaluations of environmental characteristics (drainage, noise pollution, waste management), transportation (commuting time to work/school, public transport, time spent in traffic), facilities (potable water, road, open space, street light, shopping malls/markets) and social environment (safety, friendliness of neighbours, recreational centre, good neighbourhood for raising children) could be associated with neighbourhood satisfaction. The rest of this paper is structured as follows: the second section describes the study area while the methodology is presented in the third section. The results of the study are presented in the fourth section and the fifth section forms the conclusion.

Study Area

Lagos metropolitan city is located on a narrow coastal plain on Bight of Benin in the South Western part of Nigeria. Its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean has made it a business hub in the West African sub-region. With a population estimated of over 15 million, it is regarded as a mega city (UN-HABITAT, 2012). The metropolitan area of Lagos accounts for more than one third (36.8%) of Nigeria's urban residents. With a population growth rate of between 6 and 8% yearly,

Lagos' population is believed to be growing 10 times faster than that of New York or Los Angeles, and today Lagos is more populous than 32 African countries (UN-HABITAT, 2012). Olayiwola *et al.* (2006) noted that the influence Lagos exerts in Nigeria is due to its historical and cultural background and partly due to its former role as the seat of the national government. Owing to its strong influence on the Nigerian economy, the population composition of Lagos is heterogeneous, with all ethnic nationalities in the country being represented. Most multinational corporations and organisations have their headquarters in Lagos. The metropolitan nature of Lagos with people from various walks of life makes the study on neighbourhood satisfaction somewhat difficult. In the present study, two neighbourhoods, Mushin in the high-density and Festac in the medium-density residential area of the city, were examined. The decision to choose Mushin among the low-income residential areas of the city was

based on the fact that housing deterioration, facilities overload, slum creation, squatter housing, overcrowding and socio-spatial disorderliness among others are common features of the neighbourhood (Aluko, 2012). The second neighbourhood, Festac, located in the medium-density residential area, was developed by the Federal Housing Authority in the 70s when Nigeria was preparing to host the second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (Festac). Facilities such as shopping complexes, recreational centres, hotels, clinics, schools, banks and so on are located in this neighbourhood. Festac was planned from the beginning to meet the residential needs of the low, medium and high-income members of society. To fulfil this aspiration, the property was balloted for and allotted to three classes of federal government staff and repayment was done through mortgage arrangement. However, events over the years have changed the fabric of the neighbourhood, and today, majority of residents in Festac are from



Fig.1: Map of Lagos. Source: Lagos State Ministry of Information.

the medium-income group as most of the residents from the low-income group that won the ballot have sold their property. On the other hand, majority of the high-income group living in the neighbourhood before had relocated to other emerging highbrow neighbourhoods in the metropolis such as Lekki Peninsular and Victoria Garden City (VGC).

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were obtained from a residential area survey in the two neighbourhoods. In Mushin neighbourhood, 239 adults were randomly sampled while in Festac, 220 were sampled, giving a total of 459 respondents. Sixteen single items adopted from Lee (2010) and Jeffres and Dobos (1995) were used. The items were safety and crime, public transport, roads, street lighting, waste disposal/management, public schools, drainage system, shopping malls/markets, open space, recreational centre, friends and neighbours, commuting time to work, traffic. In line with Cummins and Gullone's (2000) recommendation, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied) for the 16 items used for measuring neighbourhood satisfaction in this study. Adopting the 10-point scale is believed to be able to remove the bias (negative skewedness) associated with subjective quality of life data as people would not be restricted to a portion of the conventional scale. Such expansion appears not to systematically influence scale reliability,

and is therefore psychometrically feasible, but is made difficult by the convention of naming all response categories. It has been argued that this naming is quite unnecessary and actually detracts from the interval nature of the scale. So the solution proposed is to adopt 10-point, end-defined scales. This offers a form of rating (1 to 10) which lies within common experience and can produce increased sensitivity in the measurement instrument (Cummins & Gullone 2000). In this study, ratings for the 16 items were summed and averaged for an overall neighbourhood satisfaction of residents. Average scores for these 16 items ranged from 2.5 for safety/crime and 6.2 for good neighbourhood relationship with friends and neighbours. However, Westaway (2009) used some of these items in a study in Johannesburg, South Africa and found that average score for satisfaction with transport was 6.3 while in the present study it ranged between 3.0 in Mushin Neighbourhood to 3.9 for Festac.

Model Development

Based on the data collected, a structural equation model was developed to represent the expected underlying causal relationships likely to explain neighbourhood satisfaction among residents of the two neighbourhoods. This is represented in pictorial form as a path diagram. The model developed is based on the premise that neighbourhood satisfaction can be explained by several manifest variables. In this study, the variables were grouped in four domains (environmental quality, facilities, transportation and social

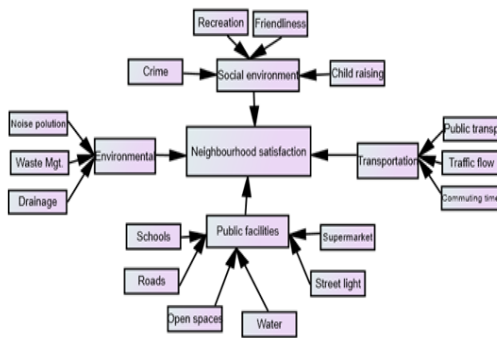


Fig. 2: Path diagram showing the various variables that influence neighbourhood satisfaction.

environment). Path diagrams showing how the various variables in the four domains influenced neighbourhood satisfaction in terms of their explanatory power and statistical significance and what their relative effect on neighbourhood satisfaction could be are presented. Before going further in to more detailed analysis, it is necessary to explain what the different components in a path diagram means (Fig. 2).

The rectangles represent measured variables also known as manifest or indicator variables while the circles or ellipses represent unmeasured or latent variables. Single-headed arrows show direct causation in the direction of the arrow between two variables (Kelly, 2011). The explanatory power of the causal relationship is provided by the regression weight and is usually drawn on the line between two variables. Endogenous variables are variables that are defined by other variables and identified as having at least one single-head arrow feeding in to them (e.g. neighbourhood satisfaction). Exogenous variables are used to define other variables in the model and

therefore have only arrows that lead to other variables (e.g. noise pollution, street light, etc.)

Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression was chosen as it allowed us to calculate the additional variance contributed by each variable in the model. Before any structural equation model was developed in this study, multiple regression models were created to understand how much of the variance in neighbourhood satisfaction of residents could be explained using standard methods. In this study, the variables explaining neighbourhood satisfaction were grouped into four domains; therefore, four models were created.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents

The data came from 459 respondents: 239 from Mushin neighbourhood and 220 from Festac. The ages of 31% and 25.6% of respondents from Mushin and Festac, respectively, ranged from 21-30 while 31% and 25.6% ranged from 31-40; 11.7% and 20% ranged from 51-60; 14% and 10.5% were above 60 years; and 1.7% and 0.5% ranged from 15-20. As could be seen from the age distributional of the respondents, more than half of the respondents were in the age bracket of 21-40. Lagos being a metropolitan city in Nigeria that has a lot of employment opportunities attracts many young men and women from neighbouring towns and cities within the country.

With respect to occupation, more than 30% of the respondents from each of the neighbourhoods were engaged in one form of business or the other (Mushin 35.1%, Festac 30.5 %) followed by those engaged in professional work (Mushin 17.6%, Festac 25.9%), artisans (Mushin 16.7%, Festac 8.6%), those engaged in some other occupations (Mushin 17.2%, Festac 15%), the rest were still schooling (Mushin 5 %, Festac 8.2%). The higher percentage of respondents that engaged in business is not surprising because the location of seaport and international airport, coupled with the agglomeration of industries. All these have made the city a business hub in Nigeria. In Nigeria, evaluating people's monthly income in a survey is somewhat difficult due to the fact that many have multiple sources of income for which they do not have records. In this study, respondents were asked to tick income group category as provided in the questionnaire.

Results (Table 1) showed that about 43.5% of respondents from Mushin earned between 31,000 and 80,000 Naira (\$206-533) monthly as compared to 7.8% from Festac neighbourhood, while 30.5% of respondents from Festac had a monthly income ranging from 81,000-150,000 Naira (\$540-1000) as compared to 20.5% from Mushin. In a similar vein, 44.5% from Fesatc earned between 151,000 and 200,000 Naira (\$1006-1333) compared to 15.5% from Mushin. Meanwhile, 14.2% of respondents from Mushin earned between 15,000 and 30,000 (\$100-200) as compared to 4.5%

from Fesatc. 6.3% from Mushin earned below 15,000 Naira compared to 2.3% from Festac. Additionally, 10.5% of respondents from Festac earned above 200,000 (\$1333) while none of the respondents from Mushin earned more than that.

The breakdown of the income pattern of respondents in the two neighbourhoods revealed two things: first, that more than 40% of respondents from the medium-density residential neighbourhood (Festac) earned between 150,000 and 200,000 Naira (\$1000-1500) monthly while 10.5 % earned above 200,000 (\$1333). Second, more than 50% in the high-density residential area neighbourhood (Mushin) had a monthly income ranging from 15,000-80,000 Naira (\$100-500). As earlier stated, the majority of residents in Festac neighbourhood are medium-income earners. In present-day Nigeria, someone whose salary is in the range of 150,000-200,000 Naira or more is categorised as being in the medium-income group.

On the educational qualification of respondents, more than 40% of the respondents (Mushin, 43.9%, Festac 47.7%) had a first-degree certificate (BSc, HND, NCE); 30.2% from Mushin had a school certificate against 30.9% from Festac; 13.2% from Festac were masters' degree holders against 10% from Mushin; 8.5 % of respondents in Mushin had a primary-school leaving certificate against 0.5 % from Festac, and the rest (Mushin 5.4%, Festac, 6.8%) had other qualifications.

Table 1:
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic characteristics	Low-income, high-density neighbourhood (Mushin) N = 239	Medium-income, medium-density neighbourhood (Festac) N = 220	Demographic characteristics	Low-income, high-density neighbourhood (Mushin) N = 239	Medium-income, medium-density neighbourhood (Festac)
Age			Education		
15-20	1.7%	0.5 %	Primary	8.4 %	0.5 %
21-30	30.5%	28.6%	Secondary	32.2%	30.9%
31-40	31 %	25.6%	First degree	43.9%	47.7%
41-50	10.5 %	15 %	Masters	10%	13.2%
51-60	11.7 %	20 %	PhD	0 %	0.9%
Above 60	14.6 %	10.5 %	Other qualifications	5.4%	6.8%
Gender			Income		
Male	46%	53%	<15,000	6.3%	2.3%
Female	54%	47%	15-30,000	14.2%	4.5%
Occupation			31-50,000	21.3%	2.3%
Civil servant	8.4%	11.8%	51-80,000	22.2%	5.5%
Artisan	16.7%	8.6 %	81-150,000	20.5%	30.5%
Business	35.1%	30.5%	151-200,000	15.5%	44.5%
Professional	17.6 %	25.9%	>200,000	0	10.5%
Student	5 %	8.2%			
Others	17.2%	15 %			

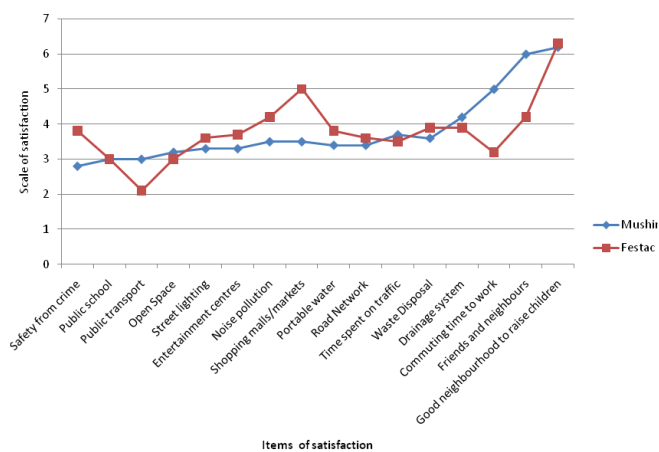


Fig. 3: Factors influencing neighbourhood satisfaction in the high- (Mushin) and medium-density (Festac) neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Satisfaction Among Residents of the High-density Residential Neighbourhood (Mushin) and Medium-density Residential Neighbourhood (Festac)

In our analysis of factors that influenced residential satisfaction among residents in the high- and medium-density residential neighbourhoods, we examined the rating of 16 items used for measuring neighbourhood satisfaction in this study (Fig. 3). The results revealed that the most important factor influencing neighbourhood satisfaction in the two neighbourhoods was the social environmental factors (friendliness of neighbours and conducive environment for raising children). The average score for each of the factors ranged from 6.0 and above. Looking at the two neighbourhoods, it could be seen that respondents from Festac neighbourhood tended to record higher ratings in all the items compared to those from Mushin except for public transport. Other factors that have an average rating above 4 for Festac neighbourhood include: friendliness of neighbours (4.2), noise pollution (4.2) and availability of shopping malls/markets (5.0) in comparison to Mushin neighbourhood, noise pollution (3.5) and availability of shopping malls/markets (3.5).

In terms of crime and safety of residents, Festac (3.8) performed better than Mushin (2.8). Mushin is one of the neighbourhoods in the state that has a high number of street urchins; hence, crime rate is higher here. Most of them are teenagers and young adults who are either not gainfully employed or have dropped out of school without any

future ambition. It is noted as one of the neighbourhoods in Lagos metropolis that records high rates of youth restiveness and violent crimes. One striking feature about how residents perceived neighbourhood satisfaction is that despite the notorious nature of this neighbourhood in relation to crime, most residents still rated the social environment as being all right for raising their children. What this suggests is that residents see crime in the neighbourhood as part and parcel of the social life and thus cannot deprive them of social ties with friends and neighbours. Parkes *et al.* (2002) noted that individuals who had friends and family close by were likely to be happier. This seems to be proved by this neighbourhood too, as most people residing in it have either settled here for decades and have strong family ties. Hence, they were satisfied with the social relations that exist between them and their neighbours. In most African societies, close family ties with relatives and kinsmen is a major factor in neighbourhood choice for raising up children even when some of the necessary infrastructure needed is in short supply.

Although the government and other relevant authorities saddled with the duty of safety and crime control in the city have been making a serious effort to reduce the crime rate, especially in some notorious spots in the city such as Mushin, attention should equally be paid to provision of infrastructure and youth empowerment to reduce unemployment. Studies have shown that a strong association exists between poverty, lack of infrastructures

and high volume of crimes, as well as other anti-social behaviour (Sampson & Wilson, 1995). In their study, McVie and Norris (2006) reported that the characteristics of neighbourhoods in which young people live play a role in influencing aspects of delinquent and drug-using behaviour, although their impact was not strong when compared to individual characteristics such as personality and gender.

The low average score obtained on infrastructural facilities used in measuring the level of satisfaction of respondents reveals the current situation in both neighbourhoods. Respondents were not satisfied with the provision of some basic infrastructure such as drainage network, road, street light, public transportation and waste disposal. This finding corroborates that of Kahrik *et al.* (2012), who in their study of Tallinn, an urban region of Estonia, reported that provision of public infrastructure had a significant effect on neighbourhood satisfaction. They noted that respondents expressed lowest levels of satisfaction on proximity and accessibility of public transport infrastructure, schools and leisure facilities including children's playgrounds. Another study by the Scottish Household Survey (2006) reported that safety was a major aspect of neighbourhood that all the respondents liked.

In their study on home owners' satisfaction in Franklin County, Ohio, United States, Hur and Morrow-Jones (2008) reported that social problems such as social activity, crime, racial composition and proximity to problem areas had a dominant

influence on overall neighbourhood satisfaction of residents. Similarly, Oktay *et al.* (2009) reported in their study that a higher sense of community feeling led to a higher sense of belonging. In other words, the level of social interaction people enjoyed in a neighbourhood would to a certain level influence their sense of belonging and satisfaction. Although the present administration of the state since its inception has tried to keep the city clean and has upgraded some facilities, the rating obtained from some of the factors used in assessing satisfaction in this study showed that a lot still needs to be done in order to meet the yearnings and desires of residents.

Environmental Quality

The influence of some environmental characteristics (noise pollution, waste management, drainage system) on neighbourhood satisfaction was examined. Many neighbourhood satisfaction and quality of life models rely on the environmental quality to predict neighbourhood satisfaction. It therefore followed that environmental quality variables used in this study should serve as good indicators and have statistically predictive power for estimating neighbourhood satisfaction. In order to test this hypothesis, a MLR (multiple linear regression) model was employed.

Equation 1.1

$$y = A + B_1x + B_2x + B_3x + \varepsilon$$

y = neighbourhood satisfaction (dependent variable)
A= constant
 ε = error term
B1, B2...B3 = drainage system, noise pollution, refuse disposal (independent variables)

Equation (1.1) measures the predictive power of environmental quality on neighbourhood satisfaction. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2.

The null hypothesis (H0) of the study was that environmental quality (EQ) was not strongly related to neighbourhood satisfaction of residents in the two neighbourhoods. The result shows that a significant relationship exists between the environmental quality and residents' satisfaction with the neighbourhood ($F = 38.63$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was accepted. As shown in Table 1 the model can accounted for 0.203 or 20 % variance in neighbourhood satisfaction. Looking at the three variables in the model (Fig.

4), drainage system ($\beta = 0.292$, $P < 0.05$) contributed most in explaining neighbourhood satisfaction. It accounted for 29% variance when other variables were held constant. This result is not surprising because more than half of the city is located in a coastal environment, thus most residents have to contend with flooding. The issue of flooding in the city could be attributed to poor drainage system. In their study, Adeloye and Rustum (2010) identified blocked drainage with solid waste and other sediments as one of the major causes of flooding in the city. However, Odunuga (2008) noted that extensive land use change due to rapid urbanisation rate in the city has led to high percentage of imperviousness to this factor. The author maintained that such high rate of imperviousness produced little or no loss during rainfall, implying that almost all the rainfall was instantaneously converted to runoff. With a poor drainage network in most part of the city to handle such a large volume of runoff, flooding has become a major problem residents face whenever it rains.

Table 2:
Multiple Regression Diagnostics

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		Sig.
	β	Std. Error	β	t	
(Constant)	2.774	.108		25.677	.000
Drainage system	.120	.017	.292	6.945	.000
Noise pollution	.074	.014	.223	5.316	.000
Household refuse removal	.086	.015	.237	5.661	.000

R 0.451, $R^2 = 0.203$, Std.Error of estimate = 0. 65063, $F = 38.63$

* Statistically significant at $p=0.05$

The next variable in the model, waste management system ($\beta = 0.237$, $p < 0.05$) accounted for 24 % of variance in neighbourhood satisfaction when other variables were held constant, meaning that a unit increase in quality of waste management within the city could lead to about 24% variation in level of satisfaction among residents. Waste management is one of the major problems facing urban centres in Nigeria, but that of Lagos seems to be on the increase due to the high volume of waste generated daily by the teeming population. Although the actual figure on per-capita household waste for the whole city is lacking, estimates from Lagos State Waste Management Authority (2006) showed that over 307.15 tons of trash, garbage, scraps and other debris were generated in 2008 by 122,862 households in Lagos Island Local Government Area (2.5kg per-household). Wahab and Saeed (2011) noted that rapid rate of per capita waste in the city is increasing geometrically due to the high level of urbanisation and subsequent population growth. The authors maintained that solid waste management in urban centres especially in developing countries where urban spatial growth is unguarded due to population explosion and the need to satisfy basic needs of man has proven to be a very difficult task. Efforts by the government to effectively manage solid waste in the city are faced with lots of challenges ranging from human to material.

Noise pollution accounted for about 22% of variance ($\beta = 0.223$, $P < 0.05$) when other variables were held constant

in the model. Noise pollution is another major problem the city is facing due to large influx of vehicles and trucks into the city and the conversion of residential neighbourhoods for commercial use. In their study on assessment of the noise level in commercial and industrial centres of the city, Abiodun *et al.* (2011) reported a mean noise level of 84.2 to 87.6 dBA for some commercial centres of the city. The authors maintained that these figures were very close to the 90.0 dBA recommended by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (1991) and that urgent steps must be taken to prevent further increase.

Looking at the city's configuration in terms of land use pattern, there is no clear distinction in land use as such. Hence, commercial centres are located in residential neighbourhoods. Festac neighbourhood at its inception in the 70s was designed purely for residential purposes; however, over the years, most part of this neighbourhood has been converted for commercial use. Mushin, which is purely a low-income neighbourhood, lacks planning, and buildings are used for both commercial and residential purposes. Going by the World Health Organisation's (1999) recommended noise level of 60dBA acceptable noise for residential neighbourhoods, one would say that the noise level in the two neighbourhoods of the city, based on the findings of Abiodun and colleagues, was above normal. This situation has even worsened since refineries in the country stopped producing at their installed capacity, so refined petroleum products are now

imported through the Lagos port, leading to a large influx of fuel tankers from other parts of the country. There are about 2,600 km of road networks in Lagos city with over a million vehicles on a daily basis. The city has about the highest national vehicular density of over 222 vehicles/km against the national average of 11 vehicles/km (Taiwo, 2005). In their study, Olayiwola *et al.* (2006) noted that environmental quality in the city has a great implication on the wellbeing of residents. The authors reported that the two major environmental problems facing the city are noise pollution and flooding. They noted that noise pollution in the city could be reduced if the government put appropriate legislation to curb the current trend whereby apartments meant for residential purposes are turned into commercial purposes such as hotels, restaurants and other commercial activities.

Model fit indices in SEM is still being debated by researchers. There is still no consensus on the form and type of fit indices that should be used for model integrity. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) according to Kelly (2011) is analogous to R^2 in MLR and provides an estimate for the amount of covariance accounted for by the model; higher values closer to 1 indicate a better fit (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is a measure of error of approximation, with values below 0.05 suggesting a close fit and values under 0.08 suggesting a reasonable fit (Keith, 2006). Chi-square (X^2) measures the discrepancy that exists between the sample covariance or correlation matrix and

fitted covariance or correlation (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993). Non-significant X^2 denotes that no discrepancy exists between the sample and the fitted covariance, indicating that the model has a good fit. The results of the structural equation model for environmental quality domain are presented in Fig. 5. Standardised regression weights are shown on each of the arrows connecting the predictor variable to the dependent variable. A major advantage of using standardised regression coefficients is the ability to compare the relative magnitude of effects across variables (Kelly, 2011). The regression (Beta coefficient) weight for drainage as shown in Fig. 4 is 0.29, waste management 0.24 and noise pollution 0.22. Relating this with the results in Table 1, it was obvious that both the values obtained from the regression model and structural equation model were the same. The model fit indices ($X^2=2.810$, $P=0.422$, $GFI=0.997$, $AGFI=0.990$, $RMSEA=.000$, $dof=3$, $N=450$) showed an extremely good fit of the model to the data; hence, we are confident that the model itself could have produced the underlying data.

Public facilities

Another null hypothesis (H_0) of the study was that provision of Public Facilities (PF) is not strongly related to residents' neighbourhood satisfaction. In testing this hypothesis, some predictor variables were regressed against neighbourhood satisfaction.

Equation 1. 2

$$y + A + B1x + B2x + B3x + B4x + B5x + B6x + e$$

y = neighbourhood satisfaction
B1.....B6 = public schools, potable water, roads, open space, street lighting, shopping malls

This equation measures the predictive power of public facilities on residents’ neighbourhood satisfaction.

The results in Table 3 show that public facilities in the neighbourhoods are strongly related to residents’ satisfaction (F=15.324, p<0.05). Looking at the variables in the model, potable water (β=.238, p<0.05) accounted highest in explaining the variation in neighbourhood satisfaction when other variables were held constant. It accounted for about 24% of variance in residents’ satisfaction with their neighbourhood in this study. Also, street lighting accounted for 23% (β 0.233, p<0.05), open space 19.5 % (β 0.195, p<0.05), roads 9.2 % (β 0.092,

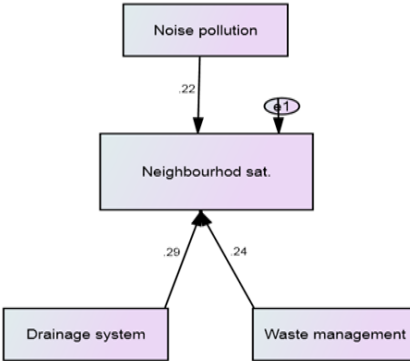


Fig. 4: Structural equation model (SEM) on environmental condition.

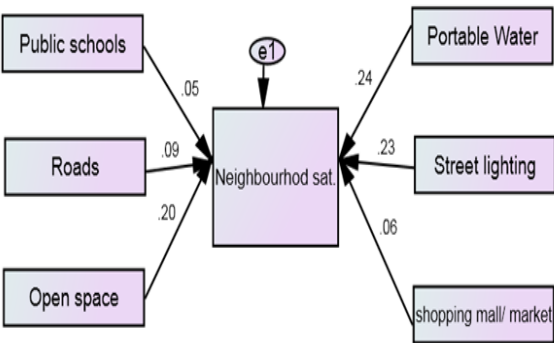


Fig. 5: Structural Equation Model (SEM) on public facilities.

Table 3:
MLR Diagnostics

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	β	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.741	.151		18.100	.000
Public schools	.022	.020	.047	1.080	.281
Potable Water	.097	.018	.238	5.499	.000
Roads	.039	.018	.092	2.142	.033
Open space	.062	.014	.195	4.504	.000
Street lighting	.092	.017	.233	5.377	.000
shopping malls and market	.030	.020	.065	1.507	.133

R 0.411, R² = 0.169, Std.Error of estimate = 0. 66655, F = 15.324
* Statistically significant at p=0.05

$p < 0.05$). In contrast, public schools ($\beta = 0.047$, $p > 0.05$) and shopping malls/markets ($\beta = 0.065$, $p > 0.05$) were not significantly related to neighbourhood satisfaction. Their contribution in explaining residents' satisfaction in the model was very small. Public school could only account for less than 5% (4.7) of the variance when other variables in the model were held constant while shopping malls/markets accounted for less than 7% (6.5).

The model fit indices on public facilities and neighbourhood satisfaction (Fig.6) shows a good fit of the model to the data ($X^2 = 23.3$, $p = 0.08$, GFI = 0.985, AGFI = 0.972, RMSEA = 0.035, dof = 15, N = 450). Looking at the relative magnitude or predicting power of each variable in the model, potable water ($\beta = 0.24$) had the highest predicting power followed by street lighting ($\beta = 0.23$), open space ($\beta = 0.20$), roads ($\beta = 0.092$). These four variables contributed significantly in accounting for variance on residents' satisfaction. The other variables (shopping malls/market, public schools) had little effect on the overall model. In other words, their predicting power or contribution to the model was very small.

Transportation

Transportation is one of the domains used in the study for measuring neighbourhood satisfaction. In this study, we hypothesised that (H0) transportation (TS) was not strongly related to neighbourhood satisfaction of residents. Three predictor variables (time spent on traffic, availability of public transport, commuting time to

work) were regressed against neighbourhood satisfaction.

Equation 1.3

$$y = A + B_1x + B_2x + B_3x + \varepsilon$$

y = neighbourhood satisfaction

$B_1 \dots B_3$ = public transport, commuting time to work, time spent on traffic

Results in Table 3 reveal that transportation was significantly related to residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood ($F = 21.575$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative is accepted. The model explained 0.125 or 13% of variance in residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Considering the fact that there were other variables that influenced neighbourhood satisfaction which were not included in the study, one would say that the model was a good one. However, the predicting power of the three variables in the model varied. Commuting time ($\beta = 0.211$, $p <$

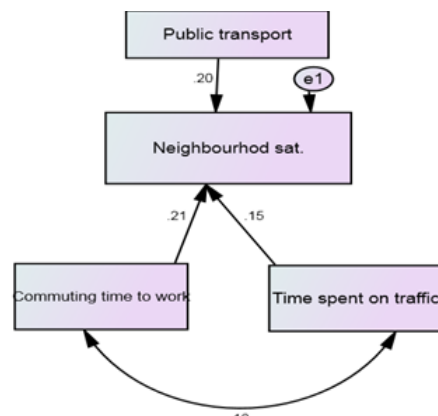


Fig.6: Structural Equation Model (SEM) on transportation.

Table 4:
MLR Diagnostics

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	3.026	.115		26.393	.000
Public transport	.074	.016	.203	4.627	.000
Commuting time work	.079	.017	.211	4.729	.000
Time spent on traffic	.064	.019	.146	3.276	.001

R 0.353, $R^2 = 0.125$, Std.Error of estimate = 0. 68191, $F = 21.575$

* statistically significant at $p = 0.05$

0.05) accounted for about 21% of variance in residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood when other variables were held constant. Considering the fact that the city witnesses daily inflow of traffic, the time residents spend in getting to their places of work to a certain level determines their satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Similarly, availability/access to public transport (β 0. 203, $p < 0.05$) is related to residents' satisfaction. What this suggests is that a unit addition to public transport in the two neighbourhoods while other variables were held constant would lead to a 20% variance in neighbourhood satisfaction whereas a unit increase in the amount of time spent by residents on traffic lead to about 0.146 or 14% variance.

The model fit indices for transportation and neighbourhood satisfaction (Fig.6) shows a good fit ($X^2=1.258$, $p=0.533$, GFI =0.999, AGFI=0.993, RMSEA=0.000, dof=2, N=450). The three variables in the model commuting time to work (β 0.21), public transport (β 0.20) and time spent on traffic (β 0.15) had significant influence on residents' neighbourhood satisfaction.

Social Environment

We hypothesised that (H0) social environment is not strongly related to neighbourhood satisfaction of residents in the two neighbourhoods. The social environment domain was measured by four predictor variables (safety, recreation centre/ open space, friendliness of neighbours and good neighbourhood for raising children).

Equation 1.4

$$y = A + B_1x + B_2x + B_3x + B_4x + \varepsilon$$

y = neighbourhood satisfaction

$B_1 \dots B_4$ = safety, friendliness of neighbours, recreation facilities, good neighbourhood for raising children.

The social environment as shown in Table 5 was strongly related to residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood ($F = 50.608$, $p < 0.05$). These four variables accounted for about 0.308 or 30% of variance in residents' satisfaction. This model could be adjudged a good one because not all variables that influence neighbourhood satisfaction were covered in the study. Looking at the predicting power of each variable in the model, friendliness of neighbours ($\beta = 0.478$, $p < 0.05$) accounted

Table 5:
MLR Diagnostics

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	β			
(Constant)	2.856	.125			22.896	.000
Safety from crime	.056	.013	.172		4.413	.000
Friendliness of neighbours	.082	.007	.478		12.107	.000
Recreational centre	.045	.012	.143		3.631	.000
Neighbourhood good for raising children	.045	.017	.107		2.741	.006

most, followed by safety from crime (β 0.172, $p<0.05$), recreational centre (β 0.143, $p<0.5$) and good neighbourhood for bringing up children (β 0.107, $P<0.05$). One reason that may be adduced to the high predicting power of social relations (friendliness of neighbours) in the model is based on the fact that in Nigeria when people are making a residential choice, great premium is given to social relations with emphasis on culture, religion and economic status. Most people would not want to reside in some neighbourhoods even when other conditions are met until they are convinced about the social relations existing in those neighbourhoods. Similar to that is safety; no matter the level of provision of services and facilities in a neighbourhood, many would consider their safety first before any other factor. The findings of this study corroborated Lansing and Marans’ (1969) assertion that though planners support the importance of physical characteristics (environment), residents consider social factors first before any other factors in judging a neighbourhood. As could be seen from the four domains used in this study to

evaluate neighbourhood satisfaction, the social domain had the highest F value of 50.608 and R^2 of 0.308 or 30.8%. What this suggests, is that the social factors were of greater importance to residents in judging their neighbourhood than the other factors (environmental quality, public facilities, transportation).

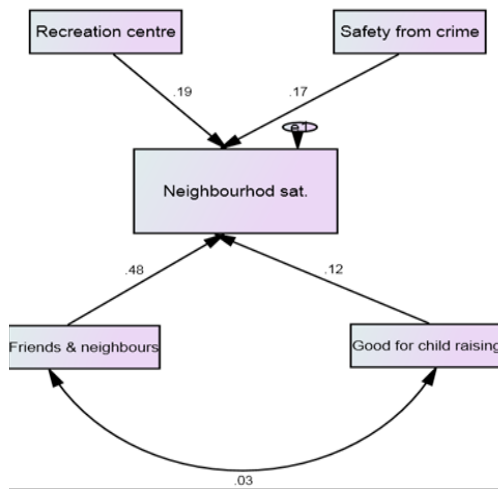


Fig.7: Structural Equation Model (SEM) on social environment.

The social domain shown in the SEM (Fig. 7) involved four variables. The model result showed a go fit ($X^2= 7.029$, $p=0.218$, $GFI = 0.994$, $AGFI = 0.982$, $RMSEA =$

0.030, $\text{dof} = 5$, $N = 450$). Friendliness of neighbours ($\beta = 0.48$) has the highest predicting power among the four variables followed by recreation centre ($\beta = 0.19$), safety ($\beta = 0.17$) and good neighbourhood for bringing up children ($\beta = 0.12$). The significant contribution of safety from crime in this model contradicts the findings of earlier research (Lipsetz, 2000; Newman & Duncan, 1979; Petras, 2003) who reported that it has often failed to make a significant statistical contribution to satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study showed that the four domains (environmental quality, social environment, transportation, facilities) used in this study significantly influenced neighbourhood satisfaction of residents' in the two neighbourhoods (Mushin and Festac). However, the level of their effects varied as shown by the predicting power of the models. The social environment domain model had the highest predicting power ($R^2 = 0.308$, Std.Error of estimate = 0.60676, $F = 50.608$) followed by environmental quality model ($R^2 = 0.203$, Std.Error of estimate = 0.65063, $F = 38.63$), facilities ($R^2 = 0.169$, Std.Error of estimate = 0.66655, $F = 15.324$) and transportation ($R^2 = 0.125$, Std.Error of estimate = 0.68191, $F = 21.575$). Among all the variables in the models, friendliness of neighbours ($\beta = 0.48$) had the strongest predicting power on neighbourhood satisfaction followed by drainage ($\beta = 0.29$), waste management and potable water ($\beta = 0.24$), street lighting ($\beta = 0.23$), noise pollution ($\beta = 0.22$), commuting

time to work ($\beta = 0.21$), public transport ($\beta = 0.20$), recreational centre ($\beta = 0.19$). The contribution of each of these variables showed their relevance in explaining what influenced residents satisfaction in the two neighbourhoods. However, there should be caution when using these variables as measures for assessing neighbourhood satisfaction because some other latent variables or factors are equally at work. Policymakers should be cautious of such a neat, short-hand approach when addressing the needs of residents. As could be seen from this study, public schools ($\beta = 0.047$) and shopping malls/markets ($\beta = 0.065$) did not have a significant effect on neighbourhood satisfaction of residents in the two neighbourhoods. What this implies in essence is that focusing much attention on the provision of public schools and markets in these neighbourhoods by government may not really yield the desired results in terms of promoting neighbourhood satisfaction among residents. This finding does not negate the importance of public facilities in urban centres. The role which such facilities and amenities play indirectly, for example, enabling social interactions to take place, is little understood in contemporary society and is a weakness in our comprehension of urban neighbourhoods today (Parkes *et al.*, 2002). Interestingly, people placed great premium on social environment of the neighbourhood in which they lived. The reason for this is not far-fetched; in African culture, social ties and relations are a part and parcel of society; hence, friendliness with one's neighbours gives

a sense of satisfaction and belonging. Despite the harsh economic situation in Nigeria, the citizens are adjudged as being one of the happiest peoples of the world (Gallup global poll 2010). Our findings have shown that a variety of factors accounted for residents' level of satisfaction with their neighbourhood. What constitutes satisfaction varies according to numerous related circumstances. Communities do not have the same level of infrastructure; likewise, residents and residents from a varied cultural background may live in a neighbourhood, and yet not share similar views regarding environmental features (Caughy *et al.*, 1999; Schell & Ulijaszek, 1999). The question of which neighbourhood attributes are most important in predicting satisfaction is of great interest to policymakers, yet it is a difficult one to answer because satisfaction studies vary greatly in the range of variables covered and in the sample population, from nation-wide surveys to surveys of groups or neighbourhoods in a single city (Parkes *et al.*, 2002). The study has been able to relate SEM path diagrams with that of MLR in establishing the factors that influence neighbourhood satisfaction among residents of low- and medium-income areas of the city. Based on the findings of the study, it is obvious that the provision of physical infrastructure alone does not necessarily translate to residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Planners and policy-makers alike should incorporate those factors that promote social relations among residents in order to help to them fulfil their life desire.

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Student Activism and The 13th Malaysian General Election: The Second Civil Society Wave After 1969

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ABSTRACT

The 13th Malaysian General Election held on 5 May, 2013 witnessed the revival of the student movement in Malaysia. Civil society activism had been on the wane for more than 40 years as the student movement had been shackled by the Universities and College Universities Act or AUKU (*Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti*), which brought student movement activism under the control and subject of AUKU. The student movement managed to gain some latitude from AUKU in 2012 when it was amended, paving the way for students to participate more actively in the 2013 General Election. The true motive of the student movement was in fact not the gaining of political power, but to regain the universities' autonomy that had been lost in the 1970s. For this purpose the student movement, under their new organisation, *Gerakan Mahasiswa 13* (GM13), launched several street demonstrations to exert pressure on the ruling government. This movement launched its manifesto in order to bring the attention of the ruling government to its demands. In the 13th General Election, the student movement played two major roles: firstly acting as a pressure group and secondly, disseminating information.

Keywords: student movement, 13th Malaysian General Election, GM13, AUKU

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INTRODUCTION

The student movement created some ripples after 2008 when it became one of the voices of civil society that sought to bring the government's attention to certain issues that were detrimental to the interests and well-being of Malaysians. Civil society can

be defined as that space that exists between the government and the common people (Edwards, 2004) and also as a community that consists of various non-government institutions that are strong enough to change the course of events within a country (Gellner, E). Student movement activism in Malaysia during the 13th General Election, which is seen as the second wave of student activism, after the first wave of the 1970s, is a particularly interesting subject of study because it started to voice opinions on issues representing university students' rights. The second wave of activism of 2013 managed to gain support from student movements entrenched in Islamic and socialist ideologies that were similar in philosophy and momentum as the student movement of the first wave that arose in the 1970s. After that first wave, the rights of university students as Malaysian citizens had been violated when AUKU placed several severe restrictions upon university students with regards to their participation in Malaysian politics. In order to regain their place as a meaningful component of the civil society movement in Malaysia, university students needed to free themselves from these restrictions and this they finally did during the 13th General Election when they underwent a period of revitalisation.

The first wave of their struggle in the 1970s demonstrated to the student movement that they could pressure the ruling government to revise its views on the future direction and destiny of Malaysians. In the lead-up to the 13th General Election, several issues were addressed by the student

movement in their manifesto including threats to national integration, increase in cost of living and haphazard national education policies; this largely reflected the struggle of the student movement in the first wave of student activism during the 1970s. Thus, it needs to be highlighted here that the core struggle of the student movement was to enable it to play effective and meaningful roles in the prevailing civil society movement in Malaysia, and not merely to gain more powers as student groups by seeking removal of restrictions to its activities. This paper utilises the idea of civil society to discuss student movement activism in the 13th General Election. The function of civil society is to be an agent of social change, either before or after the process of democratisation, in influencing the development and change of a political system (Hall, 1995). It appeared that the student movement was attempting to negotiate a space between the government and the common people; this, indeed, according to Edward Shills, is a role of civil society. . This movement basically strove to act as the voice of the silent majority. This study was analysed using secondary data derived from newspapers, namely Harakah Daily, Keadilan Daily, Utusan Malaysia and Malaysia Kini, books and journal articles.

Student Movement in 1970 and 2013 as Civil Society

The 13th Malaysian General Election was interesting because it witnessed a milestone in the student movement in Malaysia after the amendment of the Universities and

University Colleges Act 1971 (AUKU 1971) in 2012. AUKU 1971 was enacted by the government with the royal consent of the King, the Yang Di Pertuan Agong on 27 April, 1971. It was an act that came under the purview of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. This act had wide implications concerning the establishment, regulation, administration and other related matters pertaining to colleges and public universities such as the universities' constitution and law. This act was amended in 1975 and 1995, following which, it became known as the Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Act 1995. However, in 2012, it was revised again, and this time, it provided greater flexibility that allowed for student activism.

AUKU has been instrumental in dismantling student activism in a number of ways. Firstly, it dissolved several active student organisations, when under the act, all student organisations no longer came under the Societies Act 1966. This meant that student organisations effectively lost their powers of autonomy. All student organisations were now supervised by the respective Vice Chancellors (VC), and AUKU gave the VCs the power to dissolve any student organisation that could, in their opinion be hazardous to the university, or in their judgment, was no longer active. One of the casualties of this act was the Universiti Malaya Socialist Club. AUKU also curbed student activism with the setting up of a Student Affairs Department in every university. Prior to the establishment of AUKU, student

activities were controlled directly by the University Council, and the autonomous power of organising students, which came directly from student unions, had given support, including financial backing, to the student movement. The establishment of Student Affairs Departments under AUKU, however, eliminated the student movement's self-sufficiency and made them dependent on the Student Affairs Departments for logistics, financial support and even the planning of their activities. In this way, AUKU had limited the participation of students in national politics. The section of AUKU on General Discipline in the Student Disciplinary Rules clearly prohibited student participation in off-campus activities; it is given as: "No student and no organization, body or group shall organize, conduct or participate in any off-campus activities...". Students could participate in off-campus activities only with written approval from the Vice Chancellor in advance, and approval was solely at the discretion of the Vice Chancellor. Other than that, AUKU had developed cleavage in the student movement whereby student activism was forced to be focused on university campuses only, as AUKU had prohibited university students from participating in off-campus political activities. In this way, university students usually ended up supporting a favoured group and were biased against others. Even though students participated in campus elections, they were not allowed to form parties or groups during campus elections as the universities prohibited students from competing in groups and candidates were

not allowed to use their own symbols. Rules and strict controls were imposed during campus election weeks, making students lose interest in participating in campus politics. Finally, AUKU stifled student activism by increasing competition among student bodies, by allowing more student bodies to be formed on campuses to create competition among student bodies to recruit new members. The strength and success of an organisation depends on the number of members it has and the solidarity found among them. However, university administration encouraged students to form numerous student associations and when there were too many associations, the student movement became fragmented and weakened (Junaidi Abu Bakar, 2008).

In 2009 an amendment was made to AUKU that allowed university students to participate in outside campus activities that related to Non-Government Organisations (NGO), but the student movement was not satisfied with the amendment so it kept pressurising the government until 2012, when the government had to abolish section 15 (1), (2) and (3) from AUKU, which gave university students the right to participate in politics freely outside campus compounds. The student movement gained influence and impetus in society because of several national issues such as the Hamid Tuah incident, the 13 May incident and the National Language issue. In the Hamid Tuah incident, the Selangor state government arrested Hamid Tuah and his followers after Hamid Tuah had developed a piece of land in Teluk Gong illegally;

before this Hamid Tuah and his followers had tried to settle down in Sungai Siput but they had been forced to move out. Their real intention had been to develop the land for farming. However, stemming from a speech at Speaker's Corner, Universiti Malaya students, under the leadership of Sanusi Osman, had pressured the Selangor state government, which resulted in Hamid Tuah and his followers finally being given a piece of land for agricultural purposes. Additionally, the Selangor state government also had to change its policy on the issue of distribution of land to the poor (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973). The May 13 incident of 1969 had shown how the student movement managed to pressure the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, to resign from his post after he failed to control bloodshed between ethnic groups on 13 May, 1969. On that day, it was reported that Tunku had invited his friends for a poker game while Malaysians in many parts of the country were embroiled in bloodshed (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973). This situation caused the Universiti Malaya Malay Language Society (*Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya*, PBMUM), one of the student movement bodies at that time, to pass a resolution urging Tunku to resign. Under the leadership of Syed Hamid Ali, an anti-Tunku demonstration was held on 28 August, 1969, and consequently, Tunku was forced to step down as Prime Minister on September 1970, after about a year of running battles with the student movement (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973). The National Language issue had brought the student movement

again in the national limelight when they managed to force Universiti Malaya (the only university in existence at that time) to enforce a strict policy of making Bahasa Melayu (the Malay language) the official language of the university. Even though Bahasa Melayu had been recognised in the constitution as the National Language, in Universiti Malaya, teaching sessions and all formal correspondence was still carried out in the English medium. This situation caused PBMUM under the leadership of Nordin Razak, with support from about 3000 students, to hold a demonstration called '*Demonstrasi Papan Tanda*' (The Signboard Demonstration). In this demonstration, all signboards, posters and bulletin boards in Universiti Malaya that were in English were defaced with red and black paint. In the end, Prof. Ungku Aziz as Vice Chancellor of Universiti Malaya, was forced to make it mandatory to use Bahasa Melayu in all academic and management affairs (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973).

This incident led by the student movement came with the support of the general public while the media gave sufficient coverage to the views of the student leaders. The stand of the student movement infused courage among some political leaders and public servants in the government sector to start criticising the actions of some national leaders such as Tunku Abdul Rahman, Datuk Harun Idris (Chief Minister of Selangor) and Prof Ungku Aziz for their stand favouring elitist viewpoints. This issue gained support from the general public when they too participated

in several demonstrations led by the student movement. The information gained from public speeches of student leaders to the public about issues and problems was also disseminated widely throughout the nation. Even though the student movement, in the first wave of its activities, had proved that it could change the decisions of the authorities, the students felt that the influence that they had gained was insufficient. This was the impetus that drove the student movement to participate actively in the 13th Malaysian General Election (Norshazura Mat Zuki & Ridauddin Daud, 1 March 2013). The onset of the 13th Malaysian General Election was historic because after 44 years (1969-2013), the student movement decided to participate in the General Elections again, and in no less a way than by challenging Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Hj. Najib Tun Razak, himself for the parliamentary seat of Pekan, Pahang by fielding its own candidate. The reason the student movement, under their vehicle of *Gerakan Mahasiswa I3* (GM13), decided to participate in the 13th Malaysian General Election was because they wanted their demands on academic freedom to be heard by the ruling government.

The student movement made an attempt to participate in the general election to attract the attention of the ruling government to the issue of academic freedom that had been raised during the 12th General Election (2008) but at that time, student activism was limited due to the enforcement of AUKU. Also at that time, the student movement's vehicle was *Parti Mahasiswa Negara* (PMN), which was hardly vociferous as

an organisation. After 2008, the ruling government still found it hard to allow the student movement to join national politics; it tried to amend AUKU twice before the 13th General Election but that did not appease the student movement because it had not been given the autonomous power and academic freedom that it was seeking (Suhaimi, A., 11 February, 2013). Gerakan Mahasiswa 13 (GM13) picked Bukhairy Suffian as its candidate when it declared that it was participating in the 2013 general elections (Nazri, A., 5 April, 2013). However, two days before nomination day, GM13 suddenly declared that it was withdrawing on the grounds that the opposition coalition, *Pakatan Rakyat*, had agreed to accept their manifesto. GM13 had consulted with both political coalitions (*Pakatan Rakyat* and *Barisan Nasional*) before they had decided to participate in Malaysia's 13th General Election to further their struggle for academic freedom, but no response had been given by either political party. Subsequently, GM13 decided to participate in the general election without relying on any political party to support their struggle but two days before the 13th General Election, *Pakatan Rakyat* leaders, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Datuk Seri Tuan Guru Hj. Abdul Hadi Awang, decided to accept the GM13 manifesto in their general election campaign. GM13 also knew that it had virtually no chance of winning in its bid to contest in the general election, so it decided it would be wise to withdraw (Bukhairy Suffian, 22 April, 2013). The GM13 chairman, Safwan Anang, had said

that the party wanted to make way for *Pakatan Rakyat* and *Barisan Nasional* to have a one-on-one contest. Following this, GM13 decided to throw their support behind *Pakatan Rakyat* in the campaign for the parliamentary seat of Putrajaya (Hasbullah Awang Chik, 18 April, 2013). According to Bukhairy Suffian the reason they decided to cooperate with *Pakatan Rakyat* and not with *Barisan Nasional* was because *Pakatan Rakyat* and GM13 had similarities in their struggle for political reform in Malaysia, with the main difference being *Pakatan Rakyat* was working for political reform at national level while the student movement was working for political reform at university level. This was despite GM13 having had issues earlier with *Pakatan Rakyat* due to the suspension of five *Kolej Universiti Islam Insaniah (KUIN)* students in Kedah. This was because *Pakatan Rakyat* seemed to be more democratic in its politics compared to *Barisan Nasional* (Bukhairy Suffian, 22 April, 2013). In Putrajaya, GM13 supported Dato' Paduka Hj. Husam Musa as *Pakatan Rakyat* candidate because he had helped to deliver GM13's manifesto to *Pakatan Rakyat* leaders, which had finally led to its being accepted by the opposition coalition (*Selangor Kini*, 18 April, 2013). This was actually a very good publicity strategy by GM13. It knew that it could not win the Pekan parliament seat and so the party declared that it was fighting for that seat in order to generate public awareness for their views on the issue of higher education. The reforms championed by the student movement were stated in

their manifesto (*Polisi Baharu Pengajian Tinggi Negara, Ke Arah Universiti Yang Mandiri, Demokratik dan Berautonomi*). This document highlighted eight core policies that needed to be reformed, namely: human capital, adherence to the constitution, academic freedom, planning to popularise democracy, full autonomy of tertiary institutions, autonomy among university students, free education and equal rights.

This strategy had been employed in a 1989 by-election when the Universiti Malaya Student Union (UMSU) under the leadership of Shamsudin Moner had nominated their Vice President, Azmi Tajuddin, as candidate for the Bentong parliament seat. This act brought UMSU a great deal of news coverage from WATAN of its demands (Mohd. Shuhaimi Al-Maniri, 1995). The real intention of the student movement in participating in the elections of 1989 was to try to give the real picture about national politics by using a non-racial approach. UMSU had issued a manifesto called the Student Manifesto to propagate racism-free practices in national politics. Eradication of racism in this manifesto had been recognised by *Majlis Gerakan Negara* (MAGERAN) when they studied students' life in Universiti Malaya campus (Mohd. Safar Hasim, 1986).

The Student Movement as a Pressure Group

The role of the student movement as a pressure group to the establishment was triggered by poor living conditions of Malaysians, especially Malays, who were

perceived to have been abandoned by the establishment group. After 2008, the student movement had gone on the offensive with a new spirit on certain issues that affected the general well-being of Malaysians. One issue that highlighted the student movement as an important pressure group in Malaysia was *Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik Dalam Bahasa Inggeris* (PPSMI). The student movement under their vehicle, the National Islamic Students Association of Malaysia (*Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia*, PKPIM) had made an open declaration to reject the idea of PPSMI in order to empower *Bahasa Melayu* as the National Language. They also enlisted help from several NGOs (*Gerakan Mansuh PPSMI*) and public figures (A. Samad Said) and launched a street demonstration, marching from Masjid Negara to Istana Negara to deliver a memorandum to the *Yang Di Pertuan Agong*, asking the King to intervene in this issue to stop the ruling government from proceeding with the PPSMI in the national education system. This movement had many parallels with the '*Perarakan Keranda 152*' (Coffin Procession 152) held on 3 March, 1967, when the student movement of the day had taken to the streets to protest the Enactment Draft of the National Language (*Rang Undang-undang Bahasa Kebangsaan*) at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Jimadie Shah Othman & Abdul Rahim Sabri, 7 March, 2009).

There was another initiative from students acting as a pressure group in the Lynas issue regarding the decision of the ruling government to allow a multi-billion

corporation from Australia to operate a rare earth processing plant at Gebeng, Kuantan. The student movement championed this issue because there were several unresolved issues in China and Australia regarding rare earth processing that had made the student movement, as a component of civil society, to contend that this plant would endanger the health of Malaysians. The student movement, represented by several vehicles like *Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam* (PMI), *Mahasiswa Demokratik Malaysia* (DEMA), *Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia* (SMM), *Gerakan Mahasiswa Selamatkan Rakyat* (GMSR), *Aksi Mahasiswa Peduli* (AKSI) and *Kongres Gerakan Mahasiswa Pantai Timur* (GEMPUR) had agreed to participate in *Himpunan Hijau 2.0*, which turned out to be one of the biggest street demonstrations in Malaysia. It was held in several cities around Malaysia (Kuantan, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Ipoh and Kamunting) and involved 20,000 Malaysians who protested the government's decision to build a rare earth processing plant in Malaysia (Malaysia Kini, 19 May, 2011).

Another issue that led to the student movement's positioning of itself as a pressure group in Malaysia was the rising cost of living, especially after the 13th General Election. The ruling party, which had won the election, breached its promises regarding curbing costs of living and instead, increased the price of oil/gas, electricity, water, taxes and highway tolls. This prompted the student movement, under its vehicle, the Movement to Reduce the Cost of Living (*Gerakan Turun Kos Sara*

Hidup [Turun]) to call upon all Malaysians on 31 December, 2013 to take to the streets in protest against government decisions on this matter. This situation was the same as the issue that had been brought up by the student movement in the 1960s and 1970s when it became the voice of the rural people because the government had failed to control the increase of food prices and the decrease of rubber prices, badly affecting the living conditions of rural people (Kuala Lumpur Post, 24 December, 2013). The majority of Malaysians had been instrumental in creating a conducive spirit for student movements to be the voice of the proletariat. The students considered themselves as essentially crucial members of the community who had a valuable role to fulfil in society.

As individuals with the propensity to think rationally, their awareness of the hardship of the public become even keener when they realised that financial support for their education, which had been channelled by the government, actually came from taxpayers' money, and this shift of perception enabled them to feel more empathy for the masses. University students are equipped with knowledge and an inquiring spirit, and being introduced to a new sense of responsibility due to varsity culture and its attendant exposure, it was only natural for them to be sensitive to issues that burden society (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973). GM13, as a student movement engine in the 13th General Election, had played a major role as a pressure group to reform higher education

institutions by declaring their manifesto (*Polisi Baharu Pengajian Tinggi Negara, Ke Arah Universiti Yang Mandiri, Demokratik dan Berautonomi*). The major role of GM13 was to mobilise 13 student organisations in the 13th General Election, namely, *Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam Se-Malaysia* (GAMIS), *Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia* (SMM), *Aksi Mahasiswa Peduli* (AKSI), *Legasi Mahasiswa Progresif* (LMP), *Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Universiti Malaya* (PMIUM), *Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Universiti Putra Malaysia* (PMIUPM), *Demi Mahasiswa KUIS* (DMK), *Mahasiswa Keadilan Malaysia* (MKM), Watch 13, *Majlis Perwakilan Mahasiswa Nasional* (MPMN), *Pro-Mahasiswa Nasional* (Pro-MN), *Sinergi Gerakan Mahasiswi* (SIGMA) and Sisters In Movement (SIM). G M 1 3 successfully managed to gather 1000 university students for the *Perhimpunan Kebangkitan Rakyat* (People's Revival Assembly) on 12 January, 2013. This was a rally that saw the participation of almost 120,000 Malaysians to demand that: the rights of the poor and the marginalised be respected; national wealth lost through corruption be recovered; and the people of Sabah and Sarawak be given their just dues under the Malaysia Agreement, 1963. The organisers of the demonstration claimed that Sabah and Sarawak had not been treated fairly in social, economic and political issues compared to other states in Malaysia especially on the issue of petroleum royalty, which had been included in the 1963 Malaysia Agreement. They also provided 'Lori Mahasiswa' (University Students'

Lorry/Vehicle) to go around the university campuses in the Klang Valley and also all 13 states in Malaysia to spread the student agenda and inform Malaysians about all forms of oppression and injustice committed against students (Hazayani Zakaria, 3 January, 2013).

The student movement tried to bring reforms to higher education in their struggle, and this was the main objective of the GM13 manifesto in the 13th General Election. The Prime Minister in the 10th Malaysia Plan had spoken about revamping the nation's education system so that students produced by the university system would be of suitable calibre and would be employable. Higher education reform was seen as "the direction and empowerment of national education" so that the education system would be capable of lifting the potential of students to become more confident, have high morals and be able to compete globally" (Statement by Selangor PKR Youth chief as quoted in the Independent Review, 23 June, 2010). The way to achieve this, according to GM13, was to remove any government influence on university management, and Vice Chancellors were not to be chosen by the Higher Education Minister so that the executive head of the universities would not be bound by any external forces. The university management must also not prevent or restrain students from becoming involved in social affairs and politics and lastly, the government should ensure private colleges and universities were not established for the purpose of reaping monetary gains and maximising

profitability, but they should be geared towards producing students who were equipped with characteristics as expounded in the 10th Malaysia Plan (Ong Kian Ming, 18 April, 2013).

Essentially, the manifesto that had been produced by GM13 had been a proposal to revamp the higher education system. The essence of this policy goal was the redeeming and reforming of tertiary education in institutions of higher learning, and this included the introduction of proper general governance in the areas of academic as well as student affairs. The manifesto highlighted that changes in the tertiary education agenda must start with the formulation of a National Higher Education Act, which needed to contain elements of protection against new policies that were detrimental to higher education. This formulation should be followed by the repeal of the Universities and Colleges Act (174), the Institute of Private Higher Education Act (555), Education Institutions Act (174) and the Universiti Teknologi MARA Act (173). This tertiary education policy reform would contribute to the birth of autonomous institutions of higher learning. This autonomy would then rectify the structural relationship between institutions of higher learning and the Ministry of Higher Education (*Dokumen Polisi Baharu Pengajian Tinggi Negara* or the National Tertiary Education New Policy Document, 4 March, 2013). This document highlighted eight core policies that needed reform, namely, human capital, adherence to the constitution, academic freedom, planning

to popularise democracy, full autonomy of tertiary institutions, autonomy among university students, free education and equal rights (Nizam Zain, 5 March, 2013).

The reason why GM13 did not focus on economic and social issues in their manifesto, unlike what had been done by the National Union of Malaysian Students (NUMS), which was the student movement vehicle in the General Election of 1969, was that GM13 wanted to build a strong university student body on campuses before moving to the second phase, that is, nation building (Anis Nazri, 5 March, 2013). The problem with nation building in Malaysia is that the effort towards this noble aspiration does not seem to have started at the right level with the right people, thus necessitating university students to take on the mantle of true leadership, which the student movement saw as an ingredient that was sorely needed. University students do bear the moral responsibility in this regard as they are considered future leaders of the nation. Sadly, inherent weaknesses in the set-up of local universities do not allow students to have a meaningful, supportive network established among themselves. The AUKU, in no uncertain terms, prohibits student organisations from forming any form of network without permission from the Vice Chancellor. The ruling government managed to uphold unity among the races by implementing the '*Rukun Negara*' and '*Dasar Ekonomi Baru*' (New Economic Policy); lately, the Prime Minister renewed this policy by implementing the '*Model Ekonomi Baru*' (New Economic Model).

The problem with the ruling government policy is that attempts at nation building seem superficial. A number of concepts embraced by the ruling government, such as the '*Konsep Ketuanan Melayu*' (Concept of Malays as Masters), were not accepted by GM13 as it wanted to build a new Malaysia with a new spirit of unity that is neither superficial nor ornamental, but which is tangible and can be manifested meaningfully in the daily lives of the people, rather than beheld up merely as an abstraction in the figment of propagandist imagination.

However, GM13 needed to have a strong underpinning of student movement before they could make this idea a reality. The problem with student movements at campuses is that they are split into several groups that have different ideologies. Although at first sight the proliferation of a large number of student organisations seems to augur well for the development of the student movement, in reality this produces fragmentation of the student population as students end up not speaking with one voice, and there seems to be discord among themselves. Even in their opinion of AUKU, where one would expect them to find a common voice or point of accord, there have been divided opinions, with some groups expressing strong opposition while others defend it. This is a fundamental problem that needs to be addressed by the student movement if they are to play a meaningful role in championing the rights of the common people who neither have the insight nor the congruency to express their dissatisfaction or to make themselves heard.

A policy of inclusiveness needs to be made a priority; the leanings of a particular group could be nationalist, socialist or Islamic, but the group needs to find common grounds wherein members share similar aspirations so that they can work as a team to achieve a greater good. The key point to note here is that they need to find grounds on which to agree rather than allow themselves to be led astray as each group tries to establish its own identity and starts pursuing goals that are too parochial and in the process, neglect the larger, more meaningful role that they are capable of playing in the genuine transformation of Malaysian society. At the root of this problem is the fact that a student organisation in a particular university is prohibited from establishing any form of contact with any external organisation – even with student organisations from local sister universities. This policy is akin to the 'divide and rule' policy that was used in the 1970s to curb campus politics, and that ultimately led to the weakening and disempowerment of student bodies. The president of GM13, Safwan Anang, challenged Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Hj. Najib Tun Razak, to debate issues highlighted in the GM13 manifesto, especially those pertaining to university autonomy and free education with GM13's representative. GM13 even went as far as sending an official open letter to the Prime Minister but no response was given (Mahasiswakini, 22 March, 2013). This act of GM13 added pressure on the establishment to admit that higher education institutions indeed needed to be reformed.

The ruling government chose not to respond to this idea when the Prime Minister shied away from facing GM13 in open debate even though he continued to defend government policies from the safe vantage of press statements. GM13 kept up their pressure on the establishment to admit the truth about the reality of higher education by organising street demonstrations in front of the Prime Minister's residence. The Prime Minister, as head of the ruling coalition, persisted in not agreeing to free higher education, and this stand was revealed by UMNO Youth Leader, Khairy Jamaluddin, in his debate with PKR Strategic Director, Rafizi Ramli, which clearly showed the stand of the *Barisan Nasional* government that free higher education would not be implemented in Malaysia (Pavinder, 15 April, 2012).

A movement needs attention from the public in order to gain support and that was what was strategically done by GM13. They launched street demonstrations in order to pressure the Prime Minister into accepting their challenge to a debate. In a protest gesture, GM13 also camped in front of *Radio Televisyen Malaysia* (RTM) headquarters (Safwan Anang, 21 March, 2013). The government reacted to this act of GM13 by holding three of their leaders in custody (Aedi Asri, 22 March, 2013). Many groups responded to this repressive action, and it is worthy of mention that many groups came out in open support of GM13; these included political parties (*Pemuda Parti Al-Islam SeMalaysia*), student organisations (*Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam Se-Malaysia*

[Gamis], *Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia* [SMM], *Aksi Mahasiswa Peduli* [Aksi], *Legasi Mahasiswa Progresif* [LMP], *Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Universiti Malaya* [PMIUM], *Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Universiti Putra Malaysia* [PMIUPM], *Demi Mahasiswa KUIS* [DMK], *Mahasiswa Keadilan Malaysia* [MKM], Watch 13, *Majlis Perwakilan Mahasiswa Nasional* [MPMN], *Pro-Mahasiswa Nasional* [Pro-MN], *Sinergi Gerakan Mahasiswi* [SIGMA] and Sisters In Movement [SIM]) and non-government organisations (*Suara Rakyat Malaysia* [SUARAM]). All these groups gave vocal support to GM13 by expressing opinions critical of the establishment and gave their sympathetic support to the student activists and their struggle. These initiatives represented a brilliant strategy by GM13 to win the views of the public towards their struggle. Such a strategy was used previously by the Universiti Malaya Student Union (UMSU) in August 1969, when several of their student leaders had been placed under custody after 1000 university students took to the streets in demonstrations for greater university autonomy. The demonstration gave UMSU greater clout when several international student unions like the Federation of United Kingdom and Eire Malaysian and Singapore Students' Organisation (FUEMSO), the London Union of Malaysian and Singapore Students (LUMSS) and the Malaysian and Singapore Students' Forum (MASS) came out in support of them and highlighted their struggle at the international level (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973).

It is believed that student movements rebel because of generational conflict (Feaur, 1969). Feaur was of the opinion that rebellion by student movements was fuelled by resentment of older generations represented by the government, university authorities or society in general. The younger generation that makes up the student movement seemed against what they perceived to be the negative values of the older generation (establishment group) whom they considered to be tainted, obsolete and irresponsible. Feaur considered student rebellion as a reaction springing in response to the actions of misguided relics of an older generation that was already established in power and that held distorted values. Feaur highlighted a few cases in Indonesia, Germany, United States and other countries where student movements had risen to oppose the untenable values that had been doggedly defended by the establishment. Feaur was noted for highlighting the opposition of student movements towards the Vietnam War. The tendency of a government to turn a deaf ear to the suffering, needs and aspirations of the younger generation is a recurring theme, according to Feaur. This conflict between the generations can be seen in the current situation in Malaysia where numerous decisions of the ruling government have been oppressive of the younger generation.

Many acts of student movements, some of them manifested as expressions of their legitimate rights and being in pursuit of these basic rights, have been stonewalled. For example, in the issue of the National

Higher Education Fund Corporation (*Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional*, PTPTN) loans, the student movement had asked that these loans be given as scholarships rather than as interest loans that come with many clauses which are questionable. Students demonstrated by launching the “Occupy Dataran Merdeka” initiative, camping at the historic venue of the declaration of Malaysian independence in Kuala Lumpur for almost one week. Their demand was for the government to abrogate loans for higher education and convert them to scholarships instead, but the ruling government completely ignored this demand. The student movement also joined the *BERSIH* demonstrations in order to prevail on the government to reform the general election system because many, especially among the younger generation felt that there had been a lot of lacunae, gerrymandering, covert manipulation and misconduct in the conducting of the 13th Malaysia General Election. However, the ruling government did not respond to the objections. Although there had been some changes to the law in this respect, by and large, they have been merely cosmetic amendments, and the core injustices of this system still remain. The student movement, representing the voice of the new generation, would not have risen against the older generation if the administration of the country had been practising transparency and accountability. The student movement can be looked upon as the voice of the new generation because in Malaysia the age range for youths is defined

as those between 15 and 40 years (Youth Organisation and Youth Development Act, 2007). In Malaysia, students normally enrol in university when they are between 19 and 20 years old, based on application forms for admission into university and university programmes that students apply for and they usually complete their tertiary education in three to four years. Beginning from the 1970s (National Language Demonstration 1969, Signboard Demonstration & Baling Demonstration) until recent times (PPSMI Demonstration, *BERSIH* Demonstrations & *Hijau 2.0* Demonstration) the biggest demonstrations have all either been led or have had the active participation of the student movement, with support from the general Malaysian public, especially the youth.

It has been said by Edward Shills of the University of Chicago that the student movement is an important political opposition force; students are the reformists of an era who have the potential to influence and guide the establishment group. Thus, the activism displayed by GM13 was actually to guide and realign the establishment group towards a new political landscape that is not based on race but rather on factual, valid reasoning and the tenets of civil society. The student movement fought for long in order to get the attention of the ruling government to their demand for creating a new political landscape, even though the ruling government repeatedly turned a deaf ear to them. In the end, the government agreed to the student movement's demand to establish a new political landscape by

amending AUKU in 2012. Although many more reforms need to be done, this was one of the most significant victories for the student movement in their long-running struggle with the ruling government. Prior to this, university students were denied the right to participate in national politics even though the Malaysian Constitution, Article 10, Clause on Freedom of Speech, Assembly and Association had given the right to all Malaysians to participate freely in national politics (Metro, 22 October, 2012). The ruling government also changed its policy on Public/Private Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTA/IPTS). The government policy had professed to produce students who were excellent both in academic and holistic development, with all-round capabilities, but the situation on the ground was that local graduates were widely regarded as lacking in critical thinking abilities and credible communication skills, unlike graduates of elite universities, which produce well-rounded, high-performing students. Analogies have been drawn by citing the local car manufacturer Proton as producing cars in "Proton class", not "Porsche class" or "BMW class" (Ujang, Z.).

Student movement activities such as '*Mahasiswa Occupy*' challenged the Malaysian Prime Minister and exerted a certain amount of pressure on the government. Having said this, there is much more that can be done by Malaysian academia to exert their much-needed influence on efforts to further the cause of civil society and students' rights. In 2013, a

few months before the 13th General Election, the ruling government expressed a change of policy for students in institutions of higher learning (IPTA/ IPTS), emphasising the need to produce university students who are excellent in aspects of thinking skills, problem solving and oral communication (Datuk Seri Mohamed Khalid Nordin, 29 January, 2013). Many, however, would argue that this was merely an exercise in appeasement.

Student Movement Role as Information Disseminator

One of the ways to spread ideas and information in Malaysia is through fora and symposia, but in this millennium, a new medium has come to the fore that has tremendous and almost unparalleled power in creating a new form of civil society. The medium of course, is social media. Needless to say, the youth have availed themselves of this new transformational medium. For the student movement, IT-based social media has become a force that can propel student activism to incredible levels. When everyone can communicate with everyone else, then the potential for manipulation and oppression becomes greatly reduced. This technological phenomenon was used effectively in the Arab Spring movement, predominantly by university students and the younger generation, and it cut across national borders, through cultural differences and other barriers. The people of many Arab nations such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman,

Saudi Arabia and Palestine managed to establish links among themselves in cybersphere and the results were nothing less than spectacular. Movements similar to the 'Occupy Movement', which began in the US to protest economic inequality, were made possible largely through social media. These movements have been seen across continents, involving countries like Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Ireland, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In Malaysia, this new medium was used during the 13th General Election by both *Barisan Nasional* and *Pakatan Rakyat* cyber troopers, tech-savvy social media users who used the Internet to disseminate political propaganda/information to whip up the support of the public for their political agenda. This activity was spearheaded by youth/ university students. Indeed, the Internet has become the preferred channel for Generation Y in Malaysia for obtaining information (Astro Awani, 6 May 2013). The efficacy of fora and symposia was proven by the student movement in their heyday (1960-1970) when two of its symposia held in 1967 (Symposium on Rural Population Problems) and 1968 (Symposium on Malaysian Education Policy) helped to solve social issues such as land redistribution at state level and issues relating to Universiti Kebangsaan

Malaysia that had haunted Malaysia at that time (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973). The objective of the Symposium on Rural Population Problems was to discuss and review the problems faced by rural folk. The event was conducted by the Malay Language Association of Universiti Malaya (PBMUM) under the leadership of Sanusi Osman. It won positive publicity from the local media because influential personalities from universities and government administration (Senator Aisyah Ghani, E. Zainal Abidin Wahid, Arshad Ayub and Syed Husin Ali) had been present at this event. Fora and symposia conducted by student movements were highlighted by the local media and they exposed the new dimension of student movements in undertaking social work. The outcome of this symposium was that PBMUM prevailed upon the government, through Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), to provide opportunities for rural people to receive proper higher education and also to review the land distribution policy at national and state levels for the rural population (Muhammad Abu Bakar, 1973). Again, in 1968, PBMUM organised an event called Symposium on Malaysian Education Policy, which had similarities to the National Language Seminar held in 1966. Its main objective was to expose the abuse to the status of Bahasa Melayu as the National Language. One of the biggest contributions of the student movement was instigating the establishment of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 1970, when it supported intellectuals who advocated the

idea of a Malay-medium higher education institute, in the face of opposition from certain parties within the government. The PBMUM fought for the development of UKM, holding emergency summits and press conferences; they also launched a fundraiser to support the UKM sponsor committee.

GM13 used the same method to spread information to the public and to gain more support on eight core policies outlined in their manifesto. GM13, by mobilising the student organisations under them, launched several rallies and fora before the 13th General Election. One of the events that received massive support from the media, university students and the public was a seminar called 'New Political Dimensions of Undergraduates' that involved Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah (Deputy Minister of Higher Education) and was held at Auditorium Kompleks Perdana Siswa Universiti Malaya. The organiser of this event was the Student Representative Council of Universiti Malaya (MPPUM). This event managed to gather 400 to 500 participants, and coverage from the media for this seminar was quite positive especially from Sinar Harian (Nizam Zain, 13 March 2013). A rally was also launched by Gelombang Anak Muda Tolak BN (Tolak), one of the student organisations under GM13. This rally involved 150 university students who travelled in convoy from Kuala Lumpur to Temerloh, Maran and Kuantan and ended, significantly enough, in Pekan, Pahang (the constituency of the Prime Minister). Most of the students

joined the convoy using their own cars and motorcycles. This rally received positive response from the local people and in every rally, almost 1000 people came to listen to the speeches (Harakah Daily, 16 April 2013). The significance of this forum between GM13, representing the voice of university students, and Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, as representative of the establishment group, was reflective of a more liberal administration of the ruling government and its transformation programme initiated by the Prime Minister towards efforts to develop a base for the student movement as a massive engine of information dissemination among Malaysians (UM News, 13 March 2013). This forum managed to gather many student leaders to hear the ideas championed by GM13 and most of them seemed positive to the ideas presented, applauding in support when the GM13 representative presented the movement's views. Even though most of the people who attended this forum were university students, there were also members of the general public who came and gave their support at this forum. They included Y. Bhg Prof. Datuk Dr. Rohana Yusof (Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Alumni), Universiti Malaya residential college principals, representatives from the UMNO Youth Wing, representatives from the Higher Education Ministry and representatives of student organisations from all over the Klang Valley (Universiti Malaya Website). Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, as government representative, acknowledged the student

movement's role in civil society in Malaysia at this forum, while giving university students certain fresh perspectives in this regard (Saifuddin Abdullah, 18 March 2013). During this forum Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah recognised the student movement as an important member of civil society when he outlined seven roles that the student movement could play in the 13th General Election (Saifuddin Abdullah, 18 March 2013), namely:

- Students could stand either as independent candidates, student movement candidates, candidate of civil society movement or political party candidates.
- Students could propose, advocate and become agents for any candidate.
- Students were allowed to campaign. They could campaign in public spaces, during speeches, work in the operations rooms of parties, meet voters face-to-face, or campaign through the media, especially social media.
- Students could become observers in the 13th General Election. They could be signed up by non-governmental organisations, appointed by the Election Commission (EC), other bodies, or through the student movement itself, including through the Internet.
- Students could assume the role of media as a writer, reporter, photographer or cameraman; and analyse, report and record their travels during the 13th General Election.

- They could act as researcher or research assistant studying the development, course and results of the 13th General Election.
- Finally, they could vote. Generally, most of the students were considered to be non- partisan, and were seen as fence-sitters.

Using social media, the student movement created new ways to spread the message contained in their manifesto. One of these was to use cartoons/comics created on social network sites such as 'Malaysian Gag' on Facebook that parodied ruling government leaders on particular issues and Malaysians as a whole. This strategy won them a lot of attention from Gen Y, who preferred to read up on latest issues from the Internet. Through funny and interesting depictions on Facebook, the student movement managed to spread their agenda. The student movement received some help from civil society elements such as the Bar Council, as in the case of their 'Occupy Dataran' initiative through which they expressed their demands to reclaim public space as has been granted in the Malaysian constitution, Article 10. If the student movement had managed to win this claim they could have continued with their activities for claiming some of their other demands made during the 13th General Election. During this attempt, the Bar Council gave them help and space in front of the Bar Council building when the student activists were evicted from Dataran Merdeka. The Council had also contributed

sleeping bags, mats, posters and personal equipment (Malaysia Kini, 1 May 2012).

Since the 1960s, the Speaker's Corner in universities had been the platform for the student movement to spread its ideas and discuss national events but after AUKU 1971 had been implemented, this platform vanished from all universities. Fortunately, under the Prime Minister's transformation project, this platform came alive again in 2009 (Berita Harian, 15 October 2009). This opportunity had been used by GM13 to spread its ideas as stated in its manifesto to university students, and several Speaker's Corner speeches were well received, garnering much positive feedback from the university student community. From 2009 onwards, through the effort of Datuk Saifudin Abdullah, all university/colleges in Malaysia were given permission to develop a Speaker's Corner in their premises. At first, this idea received a lot of positive response from the university community but after some time, involvement of students started to diminish. This was because unlike the wide range of topics allowed at the Speaker's Corner during the 1970s, topics at the current Speaker's Corners were limited. There were cases in Universiti Teknologi MARA where students' speeches were stopped by university security officers because the students did not have permission from university authorities to speak on certain issues (Keadilan Daily, 9 December 2011).

In the end, only two universities, Universiti Malaya (UM) and the Shah Alam campus of Universiti Teknologi MARA

(UITM) (Saifudin Abdullah, 20 May 2010) had some measure of participation from the student community at their Speaker's Corners, thus only these two universities had actively harnessed their Speaker's Corners as tools for information dissemination. However, when the date of the 13th General Election came closer, the establishment, through university authorities, halted several speeches by GM13 at certain Speaker's Corners without giving any clear reason for doing so (Daniel Teoh, 20 March 2013). Even though the establishment kept pushing to stop the student movements from disseminating ideas and information to the public, the students were undaunted and persisted in their efforts by giving speeches outside university grounds. This situation where the university administration stopped students from expressing their ideas happened when the GM13 members tried to give a speech at UITM's Speaker's Corner regarding their participation in the 13th General Election, but they were refused entry into UITM. In the end, GM13 members were forced to deliver their speech outside the UITM compound, which then resulted in eight students being held in custody by the police (Harakah Daily, 19 March 2013).

Several French and German philosophers mentioned in Philip G. Altbach's journal article titled 'Student Movement in Historical Perspective', concluded that the position of university students in the campus environment was proletariat, and they were more than just cogs in the higher education system (Jones,

1962). Proletariat can be defined as the class of industrial wage earners who, possessing neither capital nor production means, must earn their living by selling their labour; they are also the poorest class of working people (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language). The Malaysian Minister of Youth and Sports, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar, said in his speech during the opening of the National Youth Consultative Council Conference (MPBN) Session II of the 29th Division 2013-2014 at Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, that youths are now increasingly concerned about rising costs of living and they feel as if they are no longer part of the nation's stakeholders. They feel they are not enjoying basic privileges as citizens of this country, even though they contribute to the country's economy (The Malaysian Insider, 16 December 2013). Ernest Mandel mentioned in his paper 'The Revolt Student Movement: Theory and Practice' that he had been told by a leading Canadian educator that the reason why students can be categorised as proletariat is not because their living conditions are unsatisfactory or because they are badly treated like nineteenth-century workers, but because socially, the university/ national system has created a sort of proletarianism in universities where students have no right to participate in the determination of the curriculum, and no right to at least co-determine their own life during the four, five or six years that they spend at the university (Ernest Mandel, 21 September 1968). The reason why the student movement kept pressurising the establishment group during

their struggle in the 13th General Election was because they wanted to change the system of higher education which had failed to give them any room to contribute in civil society and act as watchdogs in Malaysia.

Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim had proposed that civil society in the context of Malaysia in 1995 could be represented by the establishing of a society called Madani Society. At least 14 features of the Madani Society were highlighted by Ahmad Baso and some of these features were implemented by the student movement in the 13th General Election. These included spreading power in the interest of society to give strength to an alternative force; incorporating both the interests of the individual and the nation; creating empowerment of community through activities of liberal social institutions with diverse perspectives; encouraging individuals and groups in society to be respectful of others, thereby creating reconciliation; and finally, encouraging people to have a passion for knowledge and advancement of knowledge and thus, create a great civilisation and instil high morality (Ahmad Baso, October 1999). The student movement knew from the onset that it did not stand a chance of winning the election; its ultimate idea in participating in the 13th General Election was to create a society that could move or respond to issues at national level without being bound to paradoxes prevalent in modernisation. This was what it tried to create in Malaysia through the Madani Society, and they started it on a small scale, first in university campus society as it was an ideal society, having an advanced

cultural and social system in addition to being founded on moral principles that ensured a balance between freedom and social stability (Norazlan Hadi Yaacob, 2013). This idea was similar to that of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes, who had also tried to build a civil society capable of overcoming the absolute power of the monarchy and the church (Diamond, 2003). Several philosophers, including Syed Hussein Al-Atas as expressed in his book 'Who is at Fault – Mental and Personal Revolution Domains of Malays' ('Siapa Yang Salah-Sekitar Revolusi Mental dan Peribadi Melayu'), suggested that the kind of revolution that Malaysia needs is a mental revolution. The student movement continued organising fora and public speeches in the 13th General Election because that was the only way to overhaul aspects which were no longer relevant in higher education. The revolution created by the student movement in the 13th General Election had awakened Malaysian citizens by spreading information and raising awareness regarding key issues.

Additionally, Malaysian society, especially the population of rural and semi-rural Malay communities, seemed to be mindlessly bound by loyalty to the government without discernment, and this contributed to a lack of competitiveness among the Malay community because for years their hardship was manipulated by the government. It is difficult to deny that this has been a form of hindrance to achieving meaningful emancipation and progress for themselves. This is the social reform that the student movement attempted

to trigger based on Syed Hussein Alatas' mental revolution theory (Syed Hussein Alatas, 1972). The Malays are still bound by values passed on from earlier generations through proverbs like '*Budi dibalas budi*' (One good turn deserves another) and '*Budi dikenang hingga ke akhir hayat*', (A kind deed should be remembered to the grave). While these may be good guiding principles in life for any community, within the Malay community of Malaysia, they tended to encourage a certain tendency to over-value the expected moral duties of a government to its electorate; while the government was simply honouring its responsibilities to the people, the people tended to see it as the great bestowing of favours upon the common people, in superlative terms. The masses seemed to be living under the false perception that they could not disobey the government even if the rulers had committed grievous misdeeds or offences. The student movement sought to change this mindset of Malaysians, specifically the Malays, through their activities in the 13th General Election. Loyalty was to be expected based on merit and in appropriate, relevant circumstances, while archaic modes of thinking had to be seriously reviewed, to ensure the continued evolution of a Malaysian culture and nation.

Overall, it needs to be acknowledged that the student movement was not able to trigger a mental revolution among Malaysians to the level necessary for social transformation. However, to a certain extent, it did succeed in bringing to awareness a segment of the populace, especially those among the educated, who have started to

think along different lines in Malaysia (Wan Hashim, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The student movement in the 13th General Election positioned itself in the vanguard of Malaysian politics, leading front-line demonstrations at the national level such as the TURUN demonstration. It also played a major role in organising other national-level demonstrations. The student movement now represents the voice of Malaysians in demanding equality for all citizens, and this is their main role in the civil society movement, which has to function as the intermediary space between the government and the common people. Although the student movement can claim certain victories after several years of the struggle to reclaim their rights, just as with other Malaysian activists in the political field, it must be borne in mind that support and assistance was given by individuals from the establishment group, and this did much to make the situation possible. These individuals include Khairy Jamaluddin and Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, who through their courage and moral strength invigorated the often beleaguered student movement so that they could participate meaningfully and actively in the 13th General Election. In this sense, Khairy Jamaluddin was different from most previous UMNO youth leaders as he accepted the diversity in ideology and did not use his power to curb students ideology but preferred to use the debate platform to justify it. This can be seen through his participation in debates twice with Rafizi

Ramli of the Opposition party, the first time in front of student leaders in London before the Malaysian 13th General Election and the second on national television (Armand, 2012). It has to be mentioned as well that the decision of the Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Hj. Najib Tun Abdul Razak, to amend AUKU in 2012, caused certain restrictions on the student movement to be lifted. The role of the student movement can be even wider, such as that of The National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT). This movement not only managed to change Thailand's military government to a democratic government in 1973 but it also went deep into the hinterland, especially to poor villages in order to spread the idea of democratic government. This movement developed democracy classes to help Thailand's rural and semi-rural people to understand the process of democracy in a better way. Given the rather disturbing and thought-provoking statistics that 30% of Malaysians living in rural and semi-rural parts of Malaysia had put 71% of politicians into Parliament, and that 158 of the 222 parliamentary seats are classified as non-urban (malaysianfactbook.com), the urgency and importance accorded to reaching out to the secluded rural population may well hold the key in deciding the future political landscape of the nation. This point cannot be stressed enough. The student movement in the 13th General Election took some steps in the right direction by canvassing from state to state to deliver messages of its manifesto and regarding the shortcomings of the establishment, but they did not go deep enough into the countryside and to

poor villages to enlighten the people of the realities of the current situation. The urban population already had access to information but the rural people remained uninformed due to unavailability of information and the infrastructure mechanisms needed for the effective sharing of information. This is the angle that needs to be worked by the student movement before the 14th General Election. Youths in the student movement would do well to heed the words of Albert Einstein: "You cannot solve a problem from the same level of consciousness that created it." In this regard, great forbearance, wisdom and maturity are essential in the student movement's onerous but highly gratifying task of disseminating truth and relevant information, thereby helping to create a lasting legacy of benevolence, peace and prosperity for Malaysia.

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Students' Islamic Personality On Amanah: A Structural Modelling Approach

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factorial structure of the Ummatic Personality Inventory (UPI). One of the constructs in UPI, *Amanah* was measured to understand the relationship among the factors namely, *Amar Maaruf*, *Nahi munkar*, Accountability to *Allah* and Accountability to Society. The sample of this study was a group of female students ($n=287$) in a government school. Data were analysed using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings for the structural model revealed that *Khalifah* and Accountability correlated to the *Amanah*. The percentage of variance accounted for by the independent variable was 63% accordingly, which indicated a very good effect size. This reflects that accountability of people for enjoining good deeds is moderately related to accountability towards society. The act of forbidding evil has a strong direct effect on accountability towards *Allah*. Thus, more efforts should be put on educating students to forbid evil-doing (*nahi munkar*). In future, a deeper analysis of this nature could be made on the other two constructs of UPI.

Keywords: UPI, *Amanah*, accountability, Islamic personality

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INTRODUCTION

Personality is a dynamic, internal psychophysical system that creates the person's characteristic pattern of behavior, thoughts and feelings (Allport, 1961). Zidan (1997) argued that personality is determined by which the situation becomes familiar, privacy and ordinary. The

individual's personality is considered to be special and unique from others. Nabhani (1960) proposed that personality and environment associate with each other to articulate behaviour as people's behaviour is changeable due to personality differences and environmental factors. McLeod (2007), furthermore, pointed out that consistency of personality is variable from situation to situation.

The Islamic personality is a psychological construct grounded in moral quality (Frager & Fadiman, 2005), which covers beliefs, behaviour, attitudes and social manners taught by the Qur'an and Prophet's sayings and actions (*Sunnah*). It also reflects the relations and situations between an individual with his Lord, himself, family and society. Islamic personality is a strong predictor of feeling closeness to God and remembering Him and His Prophet. In this way, psycho-spiritual well-being can be enhanced by a strong sense of Islamic personality. The spiritual dimension of human personality assumes that his or her life activities are guided and motivated by generation of strong faith in God (Mischel, Shoda, & Ayduk, 2008).

Amanah (Trust) is a very important characteristic of the Islamic personality. It reflects the responsibility of a person towards his Creator, God. However, the concept of *Amanah* is entrusted to human beings by God (Cloninger, 2004) in order to spread mercy based on true justice (Boeree, 2006). God commands in the verse of *Al-Ahzab*, saying that, "Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant..." (33:72). This clearly shows the command of trust given to mankind. As a *Khalifah* (vicegerent), man is superior over other creatures, and this leads him to be responsible for *Amar Ma'ruf* (enjoining goodness) and *Nahi munkar* (forbidding evil deeds). Therefore, the responsibility of trust is the fundamental trait of human personality.

The Ummatic Personality Inventory (UPI) is a psycho-spiritual measurement devised according to Islamic spirituality. In this measurement, *Amanah*, one of the constructs of UPI, tests the level of *Khalifah* (vicegerency) with responsibilities and accountabilities, as shown in Fig. 1. In

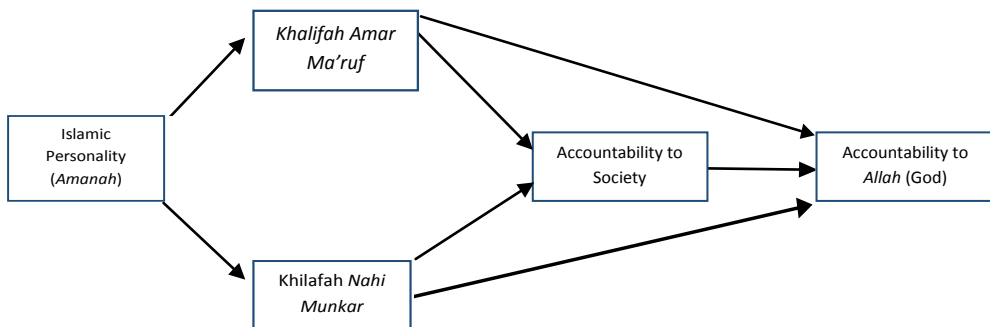


Fig.1: Islamic personality on *amanah* (Othman N, 2008)

this context, *Khalifah* can be divided into two areas (Fig.1), namely *Amar Ma'ruf* (enjoining goodness) and *Nahi munkar* (forbidding evil deeds). On the other hand, accountability can be separated into two parts (Fig.1), called Society and *Allah* (God). It is important to know that all these subscales concurrently have an effect on accountability to *Allah*. Othman (2008) identified two more constructs, other than *Amanah*, in order to measure personality. They are *Ibadah* and *Ilm*. These three constructs forming Ummatic Personality Inventory can be used to understand a Muslim's personality. With this Inventory, Muslims have an alternative tool or method for evaluating their personality from an Islamic perspective. More importantly, Muslim individuals would be able to understand their strengths and weaknesses based on their own religious context.

Othman (2008; 2011a; 2011b; 2011c) administered the UPI to 588 participants from two universities, confirming the three-structure factor and criterion-related validity of this scale. UPI had been used in several studies involving almost 2,000 school teenagers in Malaysia and the findings proved that the three constructs are valid and reliable (Othman & Buhari, 2011; Othman & Noor Idahwati, 2012; Othman & Khairollah, 2013; Othman et. al., 2013). The present study sought to expand the previous research by investigating the differences in the latent means of accountability and responsibility across the female groups. Thus, this study did not replicate any of the above studies. In fact, the study came up with new findings

about the relationships among the variables in *Amanah* construct.

In brief, evidence indicates that *Amanah* is an important concept in the context of Islamic personality. This study used the Ummatic Personality Inventory (UPI) developed by Othman (2008) to investigate this concept across female groups. This inventory measured the Muslim personality from the perspective of Islam, more specifically the Quran and the *Sunnah* (Othman, 2011). The main goal of this study was to investigate the statistical properties of this scale and examine if this scale could be applied for female individuals only. Towards this end, we evaluated the applicability of the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model testing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The relationships among the variables were also measured to satisfy the research hypotheses.

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses are as follows:

H₁: *Amar Makruf* has an effect on Social Accountability

H₂: *Amar Makruf* has an effect on Accountability to *Allah*

H₃: *Nahi munkar* has an effect on Social Accountability

H₄: *Nahi munkar* has an effect on Accountability to *Allah*

H₅: Social Accountability has an effect on Accountability to *Allah*

H₆: Social Accountability mediates the effect of *Amar Ma'ruf* on Accountability to *Allah*

H₇: Social Accountability mediates the effect of *Nahi munkar* on Accountability to *Allah*

METHODOLOGY

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a powerful multivariate technique, was administered to measure the proposed model and hypotheses for analysing causal models. A structural equation model consists of a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model was estimated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test whether the latent variables possess sufficient construct validity. The structural model was used to present the relations of causal effects among the latent variables. The data analysis proceeded with the two-step approach of the structural equation modelling.

Sample

The study used a convenience sample of 287 students from a government female secondary school. A total of 19% of the respondents had two siblings, 65% of the respondents had three to five siblings and the rest of the respondents had above five siblings. As for parental status, 84% of the respondents had their mother and father living together while the rest of the respondents had a stepmother/father and 10% of the respondents had a single mother/father. The selected sample for this study was large enough to ensure statistical significance according to the general rule of thumb (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010).

Instrument

The Ummatic Personality Inventory (UPI) was adapted from an instrument developed by Nooraini (2008; 2011a; 2011b; 2011c). The UPI has two sections. The first section considers demographic information of the respondents, which includes residence, salary of parents, siblings, parental status and state in which they were born. The second section consists of 69 items representing three constructs namely, *Ibadah*, *Amanah* and *Ilm*. These constructs were generated using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) while the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to validate the generated constructs. The reliability test indicated that the instrument was reliable, given that the overall reliability value of Cronbach's Alpha was .963. The findings revealed that with the use of PCA, the *Ibadah* (worship) construct produced five significant factors, the *Amanah* (trust) construct generated five factors and the *Ilm* (knowledge) construct produced two factors. The CFA results showed the following goodness-of-fit indices for the revised model: CMIN/DF=4.634; CFI=.965 and RMSEA=.079; each of the indices was above the threshold values. Analysis of the measurement invariance across the samples confirmed the instrument's factorial validity. The instrument used a six-point Likert scale.

The reliability value for the *Amanah* construct was .920. It consisted of 28 items signifying one's readiness to shoulder obligations without any violation either to the rules and law of *Allah* or a country. It represents the self-concept of the person.

The ultimate obligation of a person is to shoulder what has been described as his purpose of creation, that is becoming *Khalifah*. The group of items belonging to factor 1 was labelled as *Khalifah-Amal Ma'ruf*. *Amar Ma'ruf* means performing the tasks that lead to goodness. Items that belonged to factor 2 were labelled as *Khalifah-Nahi munkar*. *Nahi munkar* on the other hand is to forbid evil from being committed. The items grouped as factor 3 were labelled as Accountable-*Allah*. Being *Khalifah*, a person must always remember that he is accountable for his deeds. He is accountable to *Allah*, and at the same time to other people. Therefore, his deeds must not in any way hurt people and go against the limits set by *Allah*. Factor 4 contains a group of items describing the responsibility and accountability of individuals towards their parents. This factor was labelled as Accountability-Parents. Finally, factor 5 was named as Accountability-Society due to the reflection given by the items indicating responsibility towards neighbours, friends and society as a whole. Thus, *Amanah* is also reflective of a person's integrity. The higher the degree of integrity a person possesses, the better it will be for mankind. It indicates the readiness of a person to be responsible for his deeds. However, in this study, only four factors were left for further analysis. Residual covariance did not improve the model fit to an acceptable level. Therefore, we decided to exclude parents from further analysis of measurement.

RESULTS

Adequacy of UPI Measurement Model

As for obtaining divergent validity, the values for composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) needed to be examined. It was suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010) that the threshold of composite reliability should be greater than 0.7. All composite reliability measures of construct should, therefore, exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7. The factor loadings should be removed if they are smaller than the recommended level of 0.5. Discriminant validity can be tested by comparing the square roots of the AVE with correlations among the factors. A preliminary exploratory analysis of the data found that the average variance extracted (AVE) for the one factor ranged from 0.547 to 0.606 (Table 1), indicating that the discriminant validity was supported and the measurement model assessment was satisfactory. To examine the internal consistency reliability of the observed item questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was assessed. The resulting alpha values ranged from 0.774 to 0.828, which were above the acceptable threshold, as shown in Table 1.

The overall model fit was assessed in terms of five following measures. These include: the chi-square/degree of freedom ($\chi^2/d.f$), the traditional chi-square (CMIN), the degree of freedom (DF), the Comparative Fit of Index (CFI) and the Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) (Hair *et al.*, 2010) to obtain a model fit. It was suggested by Schumacker and Lomax (2004) that the CFI value must exceed 0.90

Table 1
Estimates of the Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Khalifah Amar Ma`ruf (KAM)	I put effort into performing my duty as khalifah.	.687	.828	.821	.606
	I can list down my role as khalifah.	.717			
	I persuade my friends to do good deeds.	.683			
	I am a good role model to my friends.	.715			
	I help to improve the behaviour of my friends.	.703			
Khalifah Nahi Munkar (KNM)	I give my advice when bad deeds occur in front of me.	.554	.806	.852	.595
	I advise my sisters when they dress inappropriately.	.714			
	I continuously encourage my family to cover their aurat.	.845			
	I continuously encourage my friends to cover their aurat.	.770			
Society	I take care of my friends` dignity.	.659	.774	.874	.581
	I honour my friends in their presence and absence.	.830			
	I never betray my friends.	.734			
Allah	I obey Allah in all matters.	.791	.874	.858	.547
	I follow Allah`s command and guidance even when they are contradicting to my own desires.	.735			
	I seek the pleasure of Allah in everything I do.	.775			
	I repent (taubat) to clear off my sins.	.753			
	I follow the advice of the Islamic scholars (ulamak).	.757			

and the RMSEA value must be lower than 0.08 in order to obtain an acceptable fit with the data. Hayduk (1988) suggested that χ^2 /d.f should not exceed 3. All the fitness measures in this study fell into acceptable ranges using CFA. As a result, the proposed model provided a suitable fit.

The hypothesised 4-factor measurement model was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis with AMOS (version

21) to assess the factorial validity of the measurement model. The fit statistics showed that the model did not fit the data (χ^2 /df = 2.51; CFI = .702; RMSEA = .120). The results also suggest for a revision of the model because there were some cross-loaded indicators, some of which showed big error variance (Byrne, 2010).

Fig.2 presents the revised 17-item four-factor measurement model analysed by

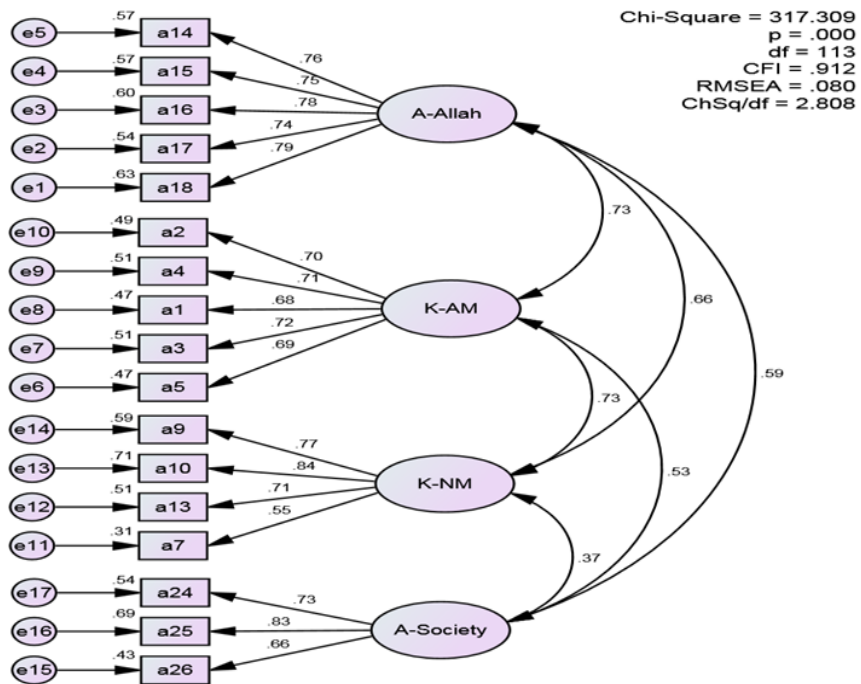


Fig.2 : The measurement model of the students' Islamic personality on amanah.

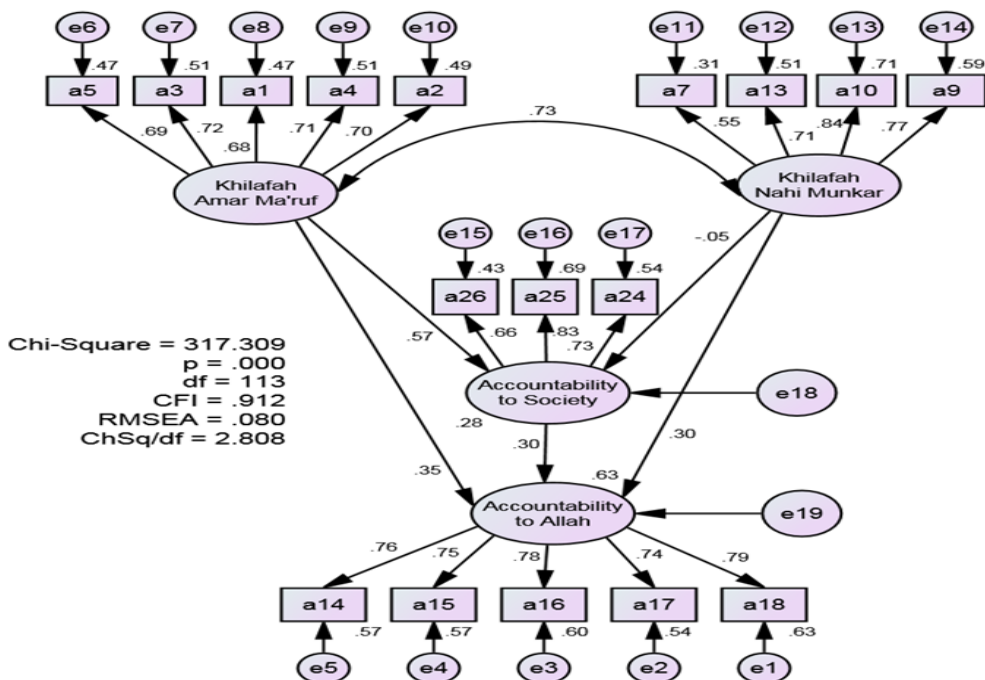


Fig. 3: Structural model of tudents' Islamic personality on amanah.

performing CFA. This revised model was consistent with the data; $\chi^2(113) = 317.3$, $p = .000$; CFI = .912, RMSEA = .080). The direction and magnitude of the factor loading were substantial and statistically significant.

Analysis of Structural Equation Modelling

Based on the good fit of the measurement model, the structural equation modelling was then estimated. Fig. 3 shows the results of the structural modelling.

Empirical Findings

According to the structural modelling, the results show that *Amar Ma'ruf* had direct influence on accountability to society ($\beta = 0.566$, $p < .001$) and accountability to *Allah* ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < .001$), supporting hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2. *Nahi munkar* had no direct influence on accountability to society ($\beta = -0.047$, $p = .674$), while hypothesis 3 was not supported and had direct effect on accountability to *Allah* ($\beta = 0.300$, $p < .001$), supporting hypothesis 4. Social Accountability had significant effect on Accountability to *Allah* ($\beta = 0.297$, $p < .001$), so hypothesis 5 was supported.

Social Accountability moderately mediated the effect of *Amar Ma'ruf* on Accountability to *Allah*, ($r = .28$, $p < .001$), supporting hypothesis 6. In addition to this, Social Accountability strongly mediated the effect of *Nahi munkar* on Accountability to *Allah*, ($r = .63$, $p < .001$), so hypothesis 7 was supported.

DISCUSSION

This study has evaluated the *Amanah* factors of students' Islamic personality. The findings reaffirmed that the UPI is a valid and reliable scale consisting of *Amanah* as one of its dimensions. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis provide support for the model. The *Amanah* dimension was represented by four indicators, namely *Khalifah- Amar Ma'ruf*, *Khalifah- Nahi munkar*, Accountability- *Allah* and Accountability- Society. In this study, the concept of *Amanah* was so much associated with *Amar Ma'ruf* and *Nahi munkar*, as supported by the Holy Quran that trust is given to mankind. This study also showed that the female students adhered to forbidding evil and enjoining goodness. As a result of this, the female students knew well their responsibility and accountability towards *Allah*.

The relationships among variables as hypothesised showed that *Amar Ma'ruf* (to enjoin good deeds) affects the accountability of a Muslim to *Allah* and also society. The findings also show that social accountability had a significant effect on accountability to *Allah*. The concept of *HablumminAllah* (relationship with *Allah*), *Hablumminannas* (relationship with other humans) and brotherhood in Islam could be positively shown in the analysis. Hazem and Maha (2011) stated that *Allah* lets us know again and again that His love is tied to acts of compassion towards others and getting closer to *Allah* involves maintaining and mending our relationships with family and friends. They further argued that social

activities are not the first things that come to mind when we are hoping to get closer to *Allah*: instead we should focus on prayer, charity and other acts of ritual worship. Yet *Allah* in His wisdom has tied His love to maintaining good relationships with the people in our lives. While the desire for increased spirituality may trigger a retreat to worship and isolation, we are reminded here that our human connections are indispensably part of our worship. Thus, the authors of this present study believe that due to these reasons, this study found that social responsibility mediated the effect of Amar Ma'aruf on Accountability to *Allah* and also strongly mediated the effect of *Nahi munkar* on Accountability to *Allah*.

Meanwhile, *Nahi munkar* (forbidding evil deeds) does not have direct influence on accountability towards society but has direct influence on accountability to *Allah*. In any society, it is easier for one to do good deeds than to forbid evil doings. The motivation to do good deeds comes from the decision of the person himself. The finding might reflect that prohibiting evil deeds stemmed more from fear of *Allah* than sense of responsibility to society. The Prophet said as narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, 'whoever sees evil being committed, the person should prohibit with his hands and if he is not able to do that he should stop with his tongue. If he is not able to do that, he should stop with his heart and this is the weakest level faith'.

In summary, this research examined the construct validity of this scale across female groups. The data analysis in this study provided good results by generating

related factors that were consistent with the previous works as quoted in this paper.

CONCLUSION

Having a good personality is a must for everyone. In the context of Islam, personality has been spelled out in the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*. Muslim scholars have studied and elaborated on the subject matter from various perspectives. One of the most important aspects is psychology. The Ummatic Personality Inventory is one of such efforts that have tried to study the subject matter theoretically and empirically. The empirical analysis proved that the instrument was reliable and valid.

In this research, the present researchers tried to validate and test the Islamic personality inventory on *Amanah*, which was developed by Othman (2008), on secondary school female students. Despite the limitation of this study (i.e. relying merely on a student sample of female secondary school students), this study makes a significant contribution to research examining responsibility and accountability of Muslim female groups towards God. This study elaborated in detail on the relationships among the factors within one of the constructs, namely, *Amanah*. The findings indicated that more efforts should be put into educating students to forbid evil doing (*nahi munkar*). The two most important agents of change, namely, the family and the school must function to instil this element as a good practice in life to create a more balanced society. However, it should be noted that the element of wisdom

in forbidding such evil or wrong-doing must be present at all time. Ultimately, it will become well embedded in one's personality and translate into one's self-beliefs. In future, a deeper analysis into this matter can be made on the other two constructs of the UPI.

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An EFL On-line Writing: Exploring Its Gains

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ABSTRACT

This study examined an EFL on-line writing programme with its automated feedback in terms of the students' writing progress, the discrepancy between the on-line and teachers' scores, and the teachers' and students' perceptions. Fifty seven EFL students aged 18-19 years old in an English-teacher education programme in Indonesia participated in the study. They completed eight practice writings and two writing tests using *MY Access*, an online writing programme. The analytical examination of their writing found that the students made progress most evidently in organization, as well as in content and development. A paired-sample t-test reported that the on-line programme and teachers' scoring based on the same rubrics were significantly different, with the on-line programme giving higher grades than the teachers'. The questionnaire and interview revealed that the teachers and students generally had a positive attitude towards the on-line programme, especially for its immediate feedback. Yet, three issues were repeatedly raised: 1) non-specific feedback, 2) overrated evaluations, and 3) the need for teacher feedback. The findings heighten the desirability for blended learning, and writing and feedback paradigm shifts. Writing should not only be placed on the cognitive plane but also be embedded in socio-cultural contexts. Feedback should help the students develop their agency in writing and take ownership of it.

Keywords: EFL on-line writing programme, feedback, socio-cultural contexts, teachers and students' perceptions, writing progress

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INTRODUCTION

The development of student's writing is often deemed a challenge due to its high-level cognitive engagement requiring idea formulation and organization (Olive, 2002). Such processing requires students to work beyond their linguistic resources

and confront the psychological and cultural aspects of writing. In their attempts to cope with these challenges, it is not uncommon for them to shift into their L1, which often results in conflicts between developing their L2 writing discourse and subscribing to their own L1 writing. It is at this juncture that the teacher's feedback is deemed important to improve their writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006) and be cognizant of their 'safe house zone' (Canagarajah, 1997, p. 179), where they can securely reflect on their own writing. Unfortunately, as Ferris (2003) and Grimmes and Warschauer (2010) have pointed out, this task is arduous work consuming much time and energy, particularly in the real foreign language context with twenty to twenty five students in a writing class.

With advancement in on-line writing, automated feedback seems to offer efficiency in terms of reducing the teacher's work. Automated feedback has been welcomed for its immediate feedback (Yang, 2004) and greater value (Denton, Madden, Roberts, & Rowe, 2008). The intermediate intervention provided by the teacher's feedback throughout the students' writing process is argued to be more effective for students' writing (Ferris, 1995; Krashen, 1984; Leki, 1990; Zamel, 1985, cited in Ferris, 2003)

However, automated feedback is also pinpointed for its lack of specific feedback (Yang, 2004, Chen & Cheng, 2006) and tendency to award higher scores than teachers' scores (Chen, 2006, cited in Lai, 2010). In addition, upon implementing *MY*

Access, one of on-line writing programmes, this study also raises concerns as to which it may pave the way to the students' L2 writing development. Given the inconclusive results of automated feedback, this study intends to extend its line of research by examining its efficacy and the teachers' and students' perceptions.

Automated Feedback in Second Language Writing

Feedback on writing is deemed important to students' writing development although it can be described as a double-edged sword. Treglia (2009), citing studies by Anson, 1999; Elbow, 1999; Ferris, 2003, stated that most L1 and L2 writing scholars agree that how feedback is conveyed through words could improve the revision; or it could hamper students' perception of feedback and possibly the quality of the revision. The degree to which feedback can facilitate the students' writing is also dependent upon how it is processed, i.e. whether as a simple linear process entailing the teacher's reading and students' revising or as a complex, non-linear model embedding various aspects of writing and students' characteristics (Goldstein, 2010). Goldstein further mentioned that an intriguing issue is to what extent automated feedback can represent the non-linear model.

Some software applications have been developed to evaluate, score or provide feedback (Warschauer & Ware, 2006). The applications, for example, include *e-rater*, *MY Access*, *criterion*. With respect to effective feedback, Lee, Wong, Cheung, and

Lee (2009) designed their own web-based evaluation system for automated feedback on content and organization of adult EFL students' writing. Using twenty seven students who were assigned a 300-word argumentative essay, they compared the feedback given to the experimental group from the web and to the control group from the traditional pen and paper. They found that the two groups were not statistically different in relation to the length of their essays and final scores.

Adopting Criterion which provides feedback on grammar, usage, mechanic, style, content, and organization, Attali (2004) reported the analysis of the first and the last essays submitted by 6th to 12th graders in United States during 2002-2003. The study revealed that their overall scores, including those of organization and development and length of essays, improved. Similarly, adopting Criterion but with 190 freshman students in a composition course, Kellogg, Whiteford, and Quinlan (2010) conducted an experiment of impacts of varied automated feedback—none, intermittent, continuous feedback on the students' essays. They found that continuous feedback benefited the students most.

A number of studies with *MY Access* have provided some insights into the L2 writing process. For example, from four studies examining the use of *MY Access*, Elliot and Mikulas (2004, cited in Ware & Warschauer, 2006) found significant gains in writing assessment for fifth to eleventh grade students. They found *MY Access* helpful and accurate. However, such findings have not

been regarded as conclusive since they are still preliminary. Another study by Yang (2004) reported students' positive attitude toward the rapidity of feedback and their dissatisfaction with unspecific feedback. In a similar vein, looking into EFL college students' writing, Chen and Cheng (2006) pointed out the lack of specific feedback in the light of content and organization. As for the scoring system, Chen (2006, cited in Lai, 2010) noted that *MY Access* tended to give higher scores and its grammar feedback only managed limited types of errors and provided inconsistent error corrections. Similarly, raising the issue of the scoring system, Herrington (2001) argued that its scoring engine, which relied on the length of the essay, could lead the student to perceive good writing as the one with lengthy words and produce such in order to gain good scores.

Comparing peers and *MY Access* feedback, Lai (2010) conducted a study with 22 EFL learners in one college in Taiwan. Lai found a preference for peer feedback rather than automated feedback from *MY Access*. It was reported that peer feedback resulted in greater improvement in writing. These findings, as Lai argued, offered new insight into the field of writing as social learning, feedback strategies, computer anxiety, and cultural aspects in writing. Particularly looking into EFL learners' perceptions in using *MY Access*, Fang (2010) reported that 46.6% of the learners felt satisfied with the automated grading system but 40% were dissatisfied with *MY Access* as the essay grader. Fang also revealed that 85% of the

learners would revise their writing following the feedback given. The results show the learners' favourable attitudes toward *MY Access* as a writing tool but not as an essay grader.

These findings have certainly thrown light on the use of on-line writing in the foreign language contexts. However, the findings related to scoring seem to remain an intriguing issue to further investigate. One crucial question to pose is whether the automated scoring only relates to criteria set as a standard or whether the teacher's writing paradigm in foreign language contexts has been an underlying factor. Thus, it would be enlightening to extend these studies by researching on-line writing in a different foreign language milieu.

METHOD

This research was a qualitative and quantitative study examining the on-line writing by *MY Access*. It poses three research questions:

1. Did the students make progress in their writing as indicated by their analytical scores?
2. Was there any discrepancy between the analytical scores awarded by the teachers and *MY Access* based on the same rubrics?
3. What were the teachers' and students' perceptions of the on-line writing?

Participants

The participants in this study comprised 57 EFL students (12 males and 45 females aged

around 18-19 years old) of four semester two-writing classes at an English teacher education programme in Indonesia. They had been learning English for about six years. In terms of their writing skills, they had minimum knowledge and sense of L2 writing despite the fact that their senior high school English curriculum adopts genre-based teaching focusing on narrative, descriptive, hortatory, and expository essays. A brief survey conducted prior to the research revealed that they were inclined to perceiving writing as a difficult skill to develop because of grammar issues and idea development. Insufficient experience of writing and low English proficiency seemed to account for their difficulties. Based on the in-house TOEFL-like proficiency test, their scores ranged from 325-400. Besides students, this study also involved a four-writing teacher team, three holding a master's degree and one holding a doctoral degree in English language teaching. The teachers have been teaching writing for about four years but they just used the computer-mediated learning in their writing class when the study was conducted.

Preparation and Implementation of MY Access

Prior to the implementation of the on-line programme using *MY Access*, the students of the Writing I classes were briefed by an expert from the company to introduce them to the features of *MY Access*. Following this, the teachers embarked on regular instruction about teaching paragraph-writing and its transformation into essay-writing.

Informative and persuasive essays were then selected and taught respectively in the first and second halves of the semester. Two topics were selected and developed for each type of the essays. For each topic, the students were required to submit at least two practice writings, resulting in eight practice writings. For the writing tests, the students took the mid-semester and final tests using *MY Access*. The test scores were obtained from automated *MY Access* analytical scoring and from the teachers based on a 6 point-scale rubric provided by *MY Access*. The details are illustrated in Table 1.

DATA COLLECTION

Data from the students were collected from four instruments. First, the students’ analytical writing scores were obtained from four writing prompts for practice and from two writing tests awarded by *MY Access* and by the teachers based on a 6 point-scale rubric provided by *MY Access*. The rubrics include five domains: (1) focus & meaning, (2) content development, (3) organization, (4) language use, and (5) mechanics and conventions. To achieve scoring reliability among the four writing teachers, each teacher scored the second submission of

one student’s writing randomly chosen and discussed the feedback together. The discussion was focused on parts of the students’ writing given the feedback and on aspects commented on (for example, clarity, relevance, coherence, redundancy, language accuracy). The inter-rater reliability among the four writing teachers was 88%, 86%, 92%, 94%, and 98%, respectively, for the five domains. Second, the students’ perceptions of *MY Access* were revealed by using the close-ended questionnaires consisting of 14 items adopted from *MY Access* and open-ended questionnaire focusing on the benefits of *MY Access* (see Appendix). Third, the students’ feelings and thoughts of using *MY Access* were also sought from their dialogue journals. These journals were written at the end of each topic, resulting in 228 journals in total. Fourth, the teachers’ perceptions of *MY Access* were obtained from a semi-structured interview conducted at the end of the mid-semester and of the final test. A digital recorder was used to tape the conversations. The interview focused on critical issues that the teachers faced in using *MY Access*.

Table 1
Topics of Essays

Submissions	1st half semester	2nd half semester
	<i>Topics of informative essays</i>	<i>Topics of persuasive essays</i>
2x	Effects of technology (ET 1 & 2)	A rewarding occupation (RO 1 & 2)
2x	The person you most admire (PA 1 & 2)	Essential job skills (EJ 1 & 2)
	<i>Topic of mid-semester test</i>	<i>Topic of final-test</i>
1x	Healthy relationships (HR)	Traditional teaching>< on-line teaching (TT><OL)

DATA ANALYSIS

The students' analytical writing scores from four writing prompts for practice were analyzed by comparing the score means of the students' first and second writing submissions to trace their possible progress. Similarly, the students' analytical writing scores from two writing tests awarded by *MY Access* and by the teachers were also compared for their score means to examine whether there was any discrepancy between *MY Access* and the teachers. A *paired-sample t-test* was performed to test the statistical difference between the students' first and second writing submissions as well as between the scores given by *MY Access* and by the teachers. With regard to the students' perceptions of using *MY Access*, their responses to the close-ended questionnaires were analyzed by counting their frequency in percentage. As for the open-ended questionnaire and dialogue journals, they were qualitatively analyzed by scrutinizing any categories that emerge from their responses. Lastly, the teachers' interviews were examined to find out what the teachers considered as critical issues in using *MY Access*.

FINDINGS

This section presents the analysis of the students' writing progress, the comparison of the scores awarded by the teachers and by *MY Access*, and the students' and teachers' perceptions of *MY Access*.

Students' writing progress

The first finding reported possible progress of two students' practice writings. As shown in Table 2, the difference of the mean scores was not glaring since in all domains throughout all topics, they fell within the range of 4.00-4.900. However, the mean score of the second writing was higher than that of the first, except for EJ in the language use domain. For example, in ET 1 and 2 in the focus & meaning domain, the difference was only 0.092. In PA 1 and 2, in terms of the *content and development* domain, the gap was 0.129. In RO 1 and 2, in the *organization* domain, the discrepancy is 0.207.

A statistical analysis further supported that the students made some progress in some domains as indicated by the significant differences between their first and second writing submissions. The progress was demonstrated by ET, PA, and EJ in the *content & development* domain. Likewise, ET and PA showed the difference in the language use domain. The most apparent progress was traced in the *organization* domain with all four writing topics being statistically different. However, lack of progress was found in ET, PA, and RO in the *focus and meaning* domain and in RO and EJ in the language use domain. Nevertheless, no progress was found in the mechanics & conventions domain.

Table 2
Students' writing progress
*p value < .005

Domains	Topics	n		Mean		SD		t-value
	Submission	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	
Focus & meaning	ET	57	57	4.682	4.774	.7256	.6567	.104
	PA	57	57	4.768	4.888	.6636	.5309	.063
	RO	57	57	4.640	4.746	.6491	.5840	.112
	EJ	57	57	4.816	4.954	.5949	.5234	.044*
Content development	ET	57	57	4.209	4.412	.7132	.5468	.002*
	PA	57	57	4.296	4.425	.6015	.4958	.019*
	RO	57	57	4.165	4.281	.5930	.6618	.158
	EJ	57	57	4.337	4.539	.5821	.4887	.001*
Organization	ET	57	57	4.000	4.220	.6753	.6118	.000*
	PA	57	57	4.093	4.316	.6372	.5391	.002*
	RO	57	57	4.035	4.242	.5521	.5870	.002*
	EJ	57	57	4.251	4.433	.5362	.5184	.012*
Language use	ET	57	57	4.460	4.689	.7218	.6513	.008*
	PA	57	57	4.621	4.835	.6747	.6140	.011*
	RO	57	57	4.521	4.568	.6543	.6861	.541
	EJ	57	57	4.935	4.928	.6315	.6576	.935
Mechanics and conventions	ET	57	57	4.220	4.350	.7100	.7221	.146
	PA	57	57	4.319	4.384	.7067	.7328	.464
	RO	57	57	4.218	4.361	.7236	.7406	.174
	EJ	57	57	4.530	4.625	.7828	.7802	.388

Table 3
Comparison between the scores awarded by *MY Access* and by the teachers
p value < .001

Domains	Writing tests	n		Mean		SD		t-value
	Scores awarded by	<i>MY Access</i>	Teachers	<i>MY Access</i>	Teachers	<i>MY Access</i>	Teachers	
Focus & meaning	Mid-semester	57	57	4.467	3.763	.5956	.9019	.000*
	Final-test	57	57	5.004	4.016	.6369	.6964	.000*
Content development	Mid-semester	57	57	4.039	3.781	.4769	.7072	.000*
	Final-test	57	57	4.460	3.977	.6442	.6470	.000*
Organization	Mid-semester	57	57	4.005	3.605	.4592	.5956	.000*
	Final-test	57	57	4.344	3.960	.6167	.7240	.000*
Language use	Mid-semester	57	57	4.391	3.921	.5792	.6994	.000*
	Final-test	57	57	4.863	4.289	.7141	.7316	.000*
Mechanics and conventions	Mid-semester	57	57	4.302	3.816	.5617	.5561	.000*
	Final-test	57	57	4.521	4.149	.8202	.7069	.000*

Comparison between the Scores Awarded by the Teachers and by MY Access

The second finding presented the comparison between the writing test analytical scores given by the teachers and by *MY Access*. As shown in Table 3, it is apparent that in all domains in the mid-semester and final tests, *MY Access* yielded higher score means. In the mid-semester test, the score means of *MY Access* fell in the range of 4, while those of teachers only reached the range 3. Similarly, in the final test, the score means of *MY Access* were dominantly demonstrated by the range of 4 but the score means of the teachers were indicated by the range of 3 except for the *focus and meaning* domain with the range of 5 and 4. The statistical analyses supported that the scores of *MY Access* and those of the teachers were statistically different with p value .000.

Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of MY Access

The third analysis revealed the students' and teachers' perceptions of using *MY Access*. The analysis of the student questionnaires found that despite the students' familiarity with computer use either for various

purposes including test taking as well their preference toward *MY Access*, 57.9% (item 8) of the students rated its feedback *less effective* than the teacher's. They positively valued its *immediate score, suggestion to obtain a better score, opportunities for revision, way to improve their score, friendly tool, and writing portfolio possession*. Nevertheless, its inaccurate score stood out with 49.1% (item 10) and 63.2 % (item 13). In terms of *satisfaction*, the features of *MY Access* tended to be rated 2-4, 5 indicating the greatest satisfaction (item 11). Despite these ratings, 93% (item 14) of the students wanted to continue the use of *MY Access*.

A further examination of the students' open-ended questionnaire, as displayed by Table 4 revealed for tendencies in using *MY Access*. The need for *teacher feedback* accounted for the highest with 40.4% despite the fact that they regarded the programme and feedback as useful.

Scrutiny of the students' dialogue journals revealed some interesting opinions about *MY Access*. Polarized into two groups, the majority of the students tended to see *MY Access* as an *ineffective program*. This first group of the students confirmed

Table 4
Students' perceptions of *MY Access*

No	Comments	Total number	%
1.	Provide good/useful program	16	28.0
2.	Give useful feedback	7	12.3
3.	Need teacher's feedback	23	40.4
4.	Improve my writing	8	14.0
5.	Others (time saving, new learning experience, less effective class, practical class, active learning)	3	5.3
Total		57	100

their responses in the questionnaire. The ineffectiveness was concerned with the *unclear feedback* provided by *MY Access*, *unreliable evaluation*, *slow internet loading*, *students' getting nowhere* with their writing. The other group, though smaller in number, valued it as *an effective tool* to improve their writing. With regard to the features, *the availability of the thesaurus*, *sample essays*, and *spelling check* was thought helpful. They were also happy to be able to obtain their scores immediately upon submission, giving them a sense of achievement.

Marshalling their voices for the teacher feedback, the students seemed to regard feedback as a forum for exchanging ideas with the teacher where they can securely proceed with their writing process. One voice concerning the need to share and exchange ideas with the teacher was strongly echoed across the students' diary journals. Not only psychologically did they feel relieved to be able to communicate the feedback to the teachers but also they tended to perceive the teachers' feedback as the teachers' involvement in their learning process. Using Canagarajah's (1997) term, the students needed to find 'a safe house' for them to 'pour out' the thoughts they had tried to express in their writing through the talk. It is through this oral interaction that the student can escape from their 'momentary distresses' in their attempts to negotiate the academic demands and their own writing mode. The following are several samples of their opinions placing important roles the teacher feedback:

- "I know it (*MY Access*) is useful but please...I want to get the teacher's feedback."
- "I am confused with the feedback from the on-line program...but I can understand if you give me feedback."
- "The teacher role is important... the teacher cannot just give it to a computer. We need a human approach."
- "I don't like to work with computer. I need to talk to the teacher. I got stuck with my ideas. I just stared at the computer and could not get any ideas. But when you go around and discuss my writing, that's what I really like. I can understand when you ask about my writing and my ideas start to come."
- "Learning with computer is not the same as learning with the teacher. Computer can give me a quick score but it cannot make me understand my writing. I don't feel comfortable so I am not too motivated. The teacher can motivate me to write."
- "I can ask you what I think in Indonesian but with computer, I can't tell my feeling. "

The analysis of the teachers' interviews found that in general the teachers had a positive attitude toward the implementation of *MY Access* as a writing and assessment tool. Yet three issues emerged: 1) scoring that tends to overvalue, 2) non-specific

feedback, and 3) the students' learning culture. The teachers were concerned over the tendency of *MY Access* to provide higher evaluation of the students' writing compared to the teachers' evaluation. The feedback was also thought to be normative so the students found it hard to understand. As for the last issue, it spoke the loudest. Though excited about obtaining immediate scores, the students did not seem to find it 'convenient' to work on the automated feedback themselves. This 'oral and reliant-on teacher culture' was thought to pose a major obstacle for the students to work with their automated feedback.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of possible progress of the students' first and second writing found that the students showed learning gains as indicated by their second writing's higher mean except for the fourth topic in the domain of language use. Statistically, the progress is particularly demonstrated by *organization*. These gains can be expected, given the writing syllabus that treats writing as discourse with its rhetorical properties to learn. These gains might, to some degree, be attributed to the instruction geared toward the students' awareness of the rhetoric of the sample essay, prior to their practice writing. In tandem with their organization progress, their *content and development* also demonstrated improvement. On the one hand, it is tempting to feel contented with the students' progress. On the other hand, however, the higher mean scores and statistical difference in the *organization*

and *content & development* domains should be interpreted with caution when taking into account the same range 4 yielded by the first and second writing. Based on *MY Access* 6- point scale rubric, 4 is considered adequate. This means that by quantification and statistical analysis, the students, to some degree, made some gains in their second writing, but it would have been more convincing if the students could demonstrate a higher range.

A further look into the analytical scores given by *MY Access* and by the teachers revealed that *MY Access* overrating the students' writings. The finding confirms studies by Chen (2006, as cited in Lai, 2010), Herrington (2001), and Fang (2010). From one perspective, the consistent findings reported from foreign language contexts, such as Taiwan and Indonesia, might suggest a higher standard applied by foreign language contexts. Given that academic writing is politically seen as a powerful tool to compete in an academic discourse community, these foreign language contexts might impose a stricter standard to prepare their students to face academic realms. Thus, this study suggests that the scoring should be regarded with caution, not only by seeing it as a *MY Access* scoring system constraint but also by seeking a deeper understanding of EFL writing philosophy. In so doing, the issue of scoring might open up new insights into EFL writing.

The analysis of the students' questionnaires and dialogue journals revealed a similar opinion. The on-line immediacy in feedback provision seems

to be the feature that the students value most. Yet they raised their concerns mainly over the ineffective *MY Access* feedback compared with that of the teachers. At the instructional level, the need for the teacher feedback can be seen as the students' seeking clarity about how to revise their essay. But taken further, such a voice is likely to reflect the very nature of writing. As Ware and Warschauer (2006) contended, the need for placing writing on the social and interactional plane should be understood beyond academic aspects often rigidly framed by cognitive processing. It is these understandings that can help students perceive writing as a process of negotiating and of nurturing their writing ownership. It is during this process, students might mitigate the pressure of writing as merely an enterprise involving organizing ideas using their limited linguistic repertoire.

As for the teachers' perceptions of *MY Access*, the analysis revealed their positive attitude toward the on-line writing, but they also pinpointed three issues: 1) different scoring, 2) non-specific feedback, and 3) learning culture. The first two responses support what the students have similarly pointed out in using *MY Access*. It is the last response that is interesting to examine further. It may be justified to see the students' learning culture as a hindrance in attempts to adopt on-line learning. It is true that shifting from teacher-reliance to self-learning, the students may not be ready to embrace this new learning culture. But it would be better to consider that the students' craving for the teacher feedback might speak

the need for 'a safe house' to negotiate their thoughts on writing. Canagarajah (1997, p. 190) contends that 'a safe house' can "serve to develop meta-pedagogical awareness and reflective learning." In other words, the students may have the need for feedback to negotiate their ideas as the main agency of their writing, not merely as a student following the automated feedback.

Implications for Foreign Language Writing Class

There are at least three implications that can be drawn from the findings: a blended learning, writing, and feedback paradigm shifting. It is apparent that the use of an on-line writing program does help the teachers with their daunting job in giving feedback. However, to set up a more solid instructional ground for an EFL context, a writing class should be designed as a blended learning class. This means that an on-line writing programme should be integrated with the teachers' intervention in the students' writing process. In terms of time efficiency, the on-line programme would still help generate automated feedback, but following this phase, the teachers should be in control of communicating and negotiating the feedback, paving the way of their writing ownership. To put it succinctly, this process should not be confined to surface-level comments centering on linguistic and rhetorical matters. The teachers should 'talk' and 'treat' the students' ideas as their very personal thoughts, giving the students a sense of being valued and appreciated. In so doing, it could be expected that

the negotiation would not perpetuate the pressure on students to write only for “having good scores sake” but to evoke the sense of “wanting to write for my ideas sake.” Concerning the scoring system, the teacher could combine the on-line scores and their own scores.

In line with the negotiating process in delivering feedback, the teachers and students should learn to develop a new perspective in writing. Both should shift conventional writing practices, emphasizing error-free writing and rigid organization, into a peripheral concern and start seeing writing as a social practice involving individual interaction and facilitated by the computer as a primary concern.

Lastly, the teacher needs to redefine the very essence of feedback provision. Feedback should operate beyond a technical writing enterprise throwing light only on language and organization; rather it should be expanded to serve as ‘a safe house’ for the students to express their personal load, allowing them to approach their writing with a sense of ownership. Taken further, such feedback would help the students minimize any mental blockage and writing anxiety. In other words, for the students to be situated in such ‘a safe house’, their processes of activating knowledge and exploring their writing experiences and beliefs should be embedded in sociocultural contexts (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of an on-line writing programme. The programme was

found to help the students make some progress in their writing, especially in *organization and content & development* domains. In terms of scores, the scores of the on-line and of the teachers based on the same rubrics were found to be different, the former being inclined to overrate the students’ writing. The teachers and students in general perceived the on-line immediate feedback as the most useful feature but pointed out its demerits as *unspecific feedback* and *overrating evaluation*. Teacher feedback was still viewed as of great importance. In the foreign language context, the findings seem to make it clearer that however sophisticated the software programme is, writing needs to be placed within social and interactional engagement, with the teacher serving as the prime mediator to help the students negotiate their writing and find ‘a safe house’ to cope with the pressure. A long process to see writing progress might be like an unclear journey but it will be a milestone in understanding writing.

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APPENDIX

The Students' Questionnaire of MY Access programme

No.	Items	Responses	Total	%
1	Using computer at campus	Every day	1	2.0
		At least once per week	53	93.0
		At least once per month	3	5.0
2	Using computer at home	Every day	46	80.7
		At least once per week	11	19.3
		At least once per month	0	0
3	Taking a test on a computers	Yes	32	56.1
		No	25	43.9
4	Preference to write using computer than on paper	Yes	48	84.2
		No	9	15.8
5	Problems using My Access	Yes	30	52.6
		No	27	47.4
6	Improving my writing	Yes	47	82.5
		No	10	17.5
7	Using feedback to improve my writing scores	Yes	41	72.0
		No	16	28.0
8	Effectiveness of MY Access	more effective	8	14
		less effective	33	57.9
		just the same	16	28.1
9 a	The features of MY Access like most: Immediate score	Yes	49	86
		No	8	14
b	Being told what to do to get a better score	Yes	47	82.5
		No	10	17.5
c	Being allowed to revise my essay	Yes	55	96.5
		No	2	3.5
d	A good way to improve my essays	Yes	49	86
		No	8	14
e	Easy to use	Yes	45	79
		No	12	21
f	Having my own writing portfolio	Yes	50	87.7
		No	7	12.3
10	The way MY Access scored my essay	Accurate	11	19.3
		Inaccurate	28	49.1
		Unfair	9	15.8
		Fair	9	15.8

11	On a scale of 1-5 (5 = most satisfied)							
	My Tutor	(2) = 23 (3) =22 (4) = 9 (5) = 3	40.4	38.6	15.8	5.2		
	My Editor	(2) = 16 (3) =17 (4) = 19 (5) = 5	28.1	29.8	33.3	8.8		
	Thesaurus	(2) = 18 (3) =18 (4) = 18 (5) =3	31.6	31.6	31.6	5.2		
	Student Portfolio	(2) = 13 (3) =12 (4) = 20 (5) =12	22.8	21.1	35.0	21.1		
	Resource Center	(2) = 17 (3) =19 (4) =17 (5) = 4	29.8	33.3	29.8	7.0		
12	Most favorable aspect of MY Access	Immediate scores	40	70.2				
		Being easy in the application	6	10.5				
		The provision of my editor	6	10.5				
		Others (time saving, no paper, mistake check)	5	8.8				
13	Least favorable aspect of MY Access	Inaccurate scores	36	63.2				
		Slow loading	4	7.0				
		Unclear feedback	15	26.3				
		Others	2	3.5				
14	Willingness to continue to use MY Access	Yes	53	93.0				
		No	4	7				

What are benefits of using *My Access* programme?

Factors Affecting the Employment of Arabic Language Learning Strategies Among Religious Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Several studies on Language Learning Strategies (LLS) showed that various factors influence the selection and the employment of LLS. This paper describes a study that was designed i) to identify the variables that contribute significantly to LLS employment, and ii) to identify the level of contribution of the predictor variables on the employment of LLS. The selected variables were Arabic language grades, language learning motivation, total family income, father's level of education, mother's level of education and total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week. This study was conducted in thirteen religious secondary schools in Terengganu. A total of 460 Form Four students were selected randomly. Research data were collected using a self-reported questionnaire, which was adapted from the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (7.0 version) (Oxford, 1990) and Language Learning Motivation (Ehrman & Oxford, 1991). The Stepwise Multiple Regression statistical test was used to answer the research questions and to test the related null hypothesis. Results showed that the four independent variables, which were language learning motivation, Arabic language grades, total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week, and father's level of education were correlated and contributed significantly to employment of LLS among the Arabic language students.

Keywords: Arabic language, language learning motivation, language learning strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Language learning strategies (LLS) are specific steps or actions taken by students to facilitate acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information until learning becomes easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-

directed, more effective and easier to be moved to a new situation. These strategies involve mental and communicative procedures to learn and use language in the improvement and mastery of target language mainframe (Oxford 1990; Nunan, 1999).

Most researchers of second language learning view LLS as a very important element that plays a major role in understanding the processes and ways of how second or foreign languages are being learnt (Stern, 1983; Ellis, 1994). LLS can make language students more efficient and effective in learning a language. In fact, most studies show that effective language students are found to be using various kinds of LLS more frequently than less effective students (Wharton, 2000; Griffiths, 2003; Holt, 2005; Gahungu, 2007). LLS can also be taught to less effective students (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990).

In relation to language learning, cognitive and social cognitive learning models are two major theoretical frameworks that are highly recognised in setting the direction of LLS research. Cognitive psychology views the information acquisition process through four stages: selection, acquisition, construction and integration (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). In the selection stage, students concentrate and focus on the specific information they need or are interested in. Then, the information is transferred to short-term memory. In the acquisition stage, students transfer the information to long-term memory for storage. In the construction stage, students connect or integrate the information stored in the short-term and

long-term memory to organise and increase their understanding of a new concept or idea. Finally, in the integration stage, while learning new information, students actively seek important knowledge in the long-term memory and transfer it to the short-term memory. While passing through all the four levels above, students use a variety of appropriate language learning strategies. They will, among others, create mental linkages, apply images and sounds, analyse and reason, as well as guess using linguistic clues. All of these are done to speed up the acquisition, storage, memory and the use of information (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990).

Furthermore, language learning is not only about information processing regarding grammar, vocabulary and the phonetic system alone. Language is also seen as a part of culture, and culture is a part of the language. Both are interdependent and inseparable without affecting the significance of one another (Brown, 1994). Therefore, language learning also involves the individual's participation in the socialisation process through the interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions. This situation has established a strong relationship between social interaction, social context and the language (Donato, 2000). Thus, social cognitive learning theory is concerned with the impact of social and cultural on human learning. It is undeniable that the social psychology and socio-cognitive scholars such as Vygotsky (1978) and Bandura (1991) also have contributed to the formation of the LLS theory. The social learning theory views individuals'

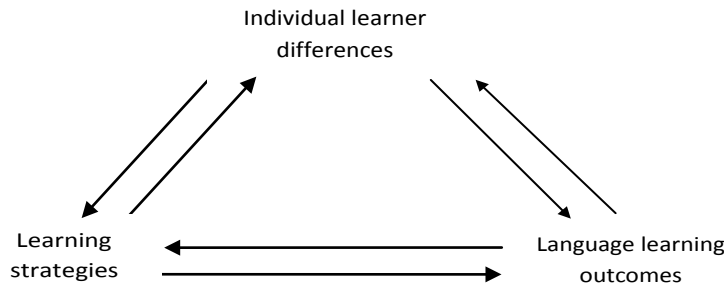


Fig. 1: A framework for investigating individual learner differences (Adapted from Ellis, 1994)

cognitive systems as a result of their social interaction with people around them (Woolfolk, 1990). Therefore, interaction is most crucial for learning development and language acquisition either in formal or natural learning situations. The main concept in the theory is that interaction does not only facilitate learning, but it is also a contributing factor in the employment of language learning and acquisition strategies (Saville-Troike, 2006). A study done by Donato and McCormick (1994) on the LLS from socio-cultural perspective shows that the employment and development of LLS are results from students' mediation and socialisation with the target language community in which language learning takes place. Language learning strategies continue to evolve and become active when there is interaction between students and their environment.

In general, both cognitive and social cognitive theories show that several factors influence the selection and employment of learning strategies as well as language acquisition. Therefore, a study on factors that contribute to LLS employment is really important. Ellis (1994) opined

that differences in students' background contribute to LLS employment, and is one of the variables that should be studied. As shown in Fig. 1, individual differences are believed to have influenced the selection and the employment of learning strategies, and the strategies used also influence some individual difference variables. For example, LLS employment helps students achieve success and enjoyment in language learning. LLS employment can also enhance students' performance and language proficiency, increase their motivation and reduce their language anxiety level. At the same time, these factors influence students' LLS selection and employment processes.

Thus, many LLS studies on the factors contributing to the selection and the employment of LLS have been done. Those studies showed that various factors such as gender (Oxford *et al.*, 1988), cultural background (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), motivation (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989), learning period (Politzer, 1983) and type of language (McGroarty & Oxford, 1990) influence the selection and the employment of LLS. Those studies also provided significant information on the

process and diversity of language learning, information for the pedagogy advancement and issues for further research.

Several empirical studies have shown a positive relationship between language achievement and LLS employment. Most studies showed that students who have a high level of language proficiency tend to use more strategies on a regular basis than the underachieving students (Bruen, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wharton, 2000). Findings of several studies have also supported that relationship even though not entirely (Khaldeih, 2000; Vann & Abraham, 1990). On the contrary, some other studies such as Chen (1990) and Philips (1991) showed that there was a negative relationship between language achievement and LLS employment. Okada, Oxford and Abo (1999) studied the relationship between motivation and employment of LLS among English native speakers who learned Japanese and Spanish. By using Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Affective Survey questionnaires, they found that Japanese language students were more highly motivated than Spanish language students, and they used LLS more often than the Spanish language students.

Regarding parents' level of education, a study by Mohd Nazali (1999) on Malay language students in Malaysia showed that there was a significant relationship between parents' level of education and the use of strategies in terms of LLS as a whole and in terms of the categories investigated. The study also reported that students with highly educated parents used

more LLS on the whole compared to other groups. Faizahani's (2002) study on English language students in Malaysia showed that students with mid-academic background parents employed more LLS than students whose parents were less educated.

The study by Mohd Nazali (1999) also showed that there was a significant relationship between total family income and overall LLS employment. Students from high-income families employed more strategies than students from middle and low-income families. However, Faizahani's (2002) study reported that there was almost no correlation between the socioeconomic status factors and the LLS. There was weak correlation between middle-class socioeconomic status factors and the media usage strategies. Thus, Faizahani (2002) suggested that there was no significant relationship between the employment of LLS and the level of socioeconomic status. Ramirez (1986) conducted a study on 105 students who learned French in two schools in New York City. This study showed that the learning period influenced the LLS employment rate. Students with a longer learning period were found to be using more LLS than those in the other group who had a shorter learning period.

Most of the research on the influence of contributing factors on LLS employment have been conducted in Western countries, and such research involving the Malaysian context is still lacking. The studies were mostly done for English, Spanish, French and German, while the studies on the Arabic language, either within or outside Malaysia,

even in Arab countries themselves, are limited. Thus, the lack of research in the context of Arabic language learning and the desire to explore the extent of a number of selected variables contributing to LLS employment were among the factors that prompted the present study. It is hoped that this study will be able to help improve the performance of Arabic language learners, which is claimed to be declining (Wan Abrisam, 2002; Saupi, 2003; Nasimah, 2006) by implementing the findings of this study. At the same time, the learning of the Arabic language in Malaysia can be made more effective, dynamic and exciting.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify factors that contribute significantly to LLS employment by Arabic language students.
2. To identify the level of contribution of the predictor variables in LLS employment by Arabic language students.

To achieve the objectives, a total of six independent variables were tested, namely Arabic language grade, language learning motivation, total family income, father's level of education, mother's level of education and total hours of learning the Arabic language outside the classroom per week.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study, which employed the survey design, was conducted in 13 religious secondary schools in Terengganu. The population of the study consisted of 1,691 Form Four students. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size, 460 students were randomly selected as the statistical sample.

A questionnaire was used as the instrument to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section was on demographic information such as Arabic language grade in the Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah (PMR) (Lower Secondary Assessment (LSA), parents' level of education, total family income and total hours of learning the Arabic language outside the classroom per week. The second section was for collecting data on the use of Arabic language learning strategies of the respondents. The third section was on questions on Arabic language learning motivation (LLM).

The instrument used in this study was developed based on the constructs in SILL version 7.0 developed by Oxford (1990). SILL is an established instrument used to study LLS based on cognitive and social cognitive theory. This instrument has been translated to 23 languages and used in more than 120 dissertations and theses. Tens of thousands of language students have been involved in the LLS studies that made use of the instrument (Lan 2005). Until now, it is still considered an effective and robust instrument to identify various strategies used

Table 1
Internal Consistency Reliability of LLS and LLM Questionnaire

Construct	Alpha Cronbach	Item
Memory Strategies	0.827	10
Cognitive Strategies	0.869	14
Compensation Strategies	0.808	06
Metacognitive Strategies	0.859	09
Affective Strategies	0.650	07
Social Strategies	0.769	06
Metaphysic Strategies	0.805	08
Overall LLS Items	0.954	60
Integrative Motivation	0.805	10
Instrumental Motivation	0.790	11
Effort to Learn and Use the Language	0.835	11
Overall Motivation Items	0.895	32

by students. Other than the six constructs in SILL (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social and affective), another construct called metaphysic construct was also added. This metaphysic construct was developed by Kamarul Shukri *et al.* (2009) based on the observation on general nature of learning Arabic language and the uniqueness of the attitude towards learning the language in Malaysia. The construct was established based on concept, theory and procedure of inventory development. The construct had also been verified by empirical studies (Kamarul Shukri *et al.* 2009; 2012). All these seven constructs were included in the second section of the instrument. Next, the questions in the third section of the instrument were developed based on the constructs and items in the motivation section of the Affective Survey questionnaire developed by Ehrman and Oxford (1991).

The face and content validities for the developed questionnaire were determined by four experts. Besides, a pilot study was conducted on 49 religious secondary school students to test the administrability of the instrument, to obtain the face validity and to determine the reliability index. Table 1 shows the values of Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients for each LLS construct with the index ranging from 0.650 to 0.869. The table also shows the values of the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients for each LLM construct, ranging from 0.790 to 0.835. These reliability indices are high and acceptable (Sekaran, 2003; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

RESULTS

The regression analysis involved six predictor variables, which were Arabic language grade, language learning motivation, total of family income, father’s level of education, mother’s level of

education and total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week. Meanwhile, LLS employment was the criterion variable to all the six independent variables. Analysis of variance in regression explained whether the constructed model had produced a good prediction on its significance to the established predictors or not. The analysis tested the null hypothesis and the differences between the dependent and independent variables. Table 2 shows the $F = 95.904$ and its significance value $= 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the first null hypothesis ($H_0.1$), which stated that there was no significant contribution by the six independent variables to LLS employment, was successfully rejected.

The results of the Stepwise Multiple Regression analysis, which identified the relative contribution of the six independent

variables on LLS employment, are summarised in Table 3. The results of the analysis showed that four independent variables contributed significantly ($p < 0.05$) to the total variance in LLS employment, namely language learning motivation, Arabic language grade, total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week, and father's level of education. The four independent variables contributed 47% to the variance in the LLS employment. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there was no significant contribution by the independent variables to LLS employment, was successfully rejected.

The main and highest predictor for LLS employment was language learning motivation ($\beta = 0.418$, $t = 10.883$, and $p = 0.000$) that contributed as much as 32.9%. This indicates that for every one

Table 2
Analysis of Variance for Stepwise Multiple Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.*
4	Regression	64.443	4	16.111	95.904	0.000
	Residual	72.740	433	0.168		
	Total	137.183	437			

Table 3
Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for the Independent Variables Influencing LLS Employment

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.	R ²	Contribution (%)
Motivation	0.420	0.039	0.418	10.883	0.000	0.329	32.90
Arabic Language Grade	0.123	0.015	0.309	8.077	0.000	0.429	10.00
Total Learning Hours	0.194	0.039	0.180	4.972	0.000	0.459	3.00
Father's Level of Education	0.055	0.018	0.106	3.018	0.003	0.470	1.10
Constant	0.001	0.142		0.006	0.996		

$R = 0.685$; $R\text{ Square} = 0.470$; $\text{Adjusted } R\text{ Square} = 0.465$; $\text{Constant} = 0.001$; $\text{Standard Error} = 0.142$

unit increase in the score level of language learning motivation, there is a predictable increase of 0.418 unit in LLS employment rate. This result clearly showed that the improvement in the level of motivation in language learning among the Form-Four students in religious secondary schools was the major factor that contributed 32.9% to the employment of LLS in learning Arabic language.

The second most important predictor was the Arabic language grade ($\beta = 0.309$, $t=8.077$ and $p = 0.000$) and its contribution to LLS employment was as much as 10%. This means that when the score of the Arabic language grade increases by one unit, LLS employment will also increase by 0.309 unit. The result clearly showed that when the achievement of the Arabic language grade increased, the level of LLS employment among students also increased. The third predictor that contributed as much as 3% of the LLS employment was the total hours of learning the Arabic language outside the classroom per week ($\beta = 0.180$, $t = 4.972$ and $p = 0.000$). The result indicated that when the total hours of learning the Arabic language outside the classroom per week increased by one unit, the LLS employment rate also increased by 0.18 unit. In other words, if the students were able to increase their total hours of learning the Arabic language outside the classroom per week, then their level of LLS employment would also increase. Father's level of education ($\beta=0.106$, $t = 3.018$ and $p = 0.003$) was the fourth and final predictor that contributed 1.1% to LLS employment. Therefore,

changes in father's level of education only contributed 1.1% of variation in students' level of LLS employment. This indicates that when father's level of education increased by one unit, LLS employment would also increase by 0.106 unit. In other words, father's level of education also has a role in the changes in the level of LLS employment among Arabic language students.

Therefore, the result of the data analysis showed that for the study population (sample size = 460), the four predictor variables, namely language learning motivation, the Arabic language grade, total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week and father's level of education were indeed the predictors for LLS employment. The value of $R^2 = 0.47$ showed that the overall contribution of the four predictor variables on LLS employment was 47%. The percentage values were 32.9% from language learning motivation, 10% from Arabic language grade, 3% from the total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week, and 1.1% from father's level of education (see Table 3). The excess of 53% can be explained by other variables that were not taken into account in this model. The finding showed that there might be other factors that affected or influenced the employment of LLS, which were not discussed in this study (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Pallant, 2001; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The results also dismissed researchers' assumptions that suggested total family income and mother's level of education were the predictors for LLS employment

among Arabic language students. The Adjusted R^2 value provided the estimation of how far this model fits with other sets of data from the same population. Its value is in the range of 0.0 to 1.0. To assess the extent to which the regression model fits or suits the data, Muijs (2004) proposed the Adjusted R^2 values <0.1 as poor (not good), 0.11 - 0.3 as low, 0.31 - 0.5 as moderate, and > 0.5 as strong (good). Given the Adjusted R^2 value for this study was 0.465, thus this developed model was considered as moderate. However, given the Adjusted R^2 value was close to 0.5, the proposed model was considered suitable to predict the level of LLS employment among Arabic language students in religious secondary schools. In general, the overall significant contribution of the four independent variables to LLS employment could be formed through a regression equation. The equation is the prediction of the dependent variables when the independent variable values have been determined. The regression equation for this study is as follows:

$$Y = 0.001 + 0.420 X_1 + 0.123 X_2 + 0.194 X_3 + 0.055 X_4 + 0.142$$

where:

- Y = LLS employment
- X_1 = Language learning motivation
- X_2 = Arabic language grade
- X_3 = Total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week
- X_4 = Father's level of education
- Constant = 0.001
- Standard Error = 0.142

With reference to the above regression equation, the null hypothesis was successfully rejected. The Stepwise Multiple Regression analysis found that the four independent variables were correlated, affecting and contributing to the level of employment of the Language Learning Strategies (LLS) among Form Four students in religious secondary schools in Terengganu. The independent variables were language learning motivation, Arabic language grade, total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week and father's education level.

DISCUSSION

Multiple Regression analysis showed that the Arabic language learning motivation, Arabic language score grade, total hours of learning Arabic language outside the classroom per week and father's level of education had contributed significantly to the total variance in LLS employment. The four independent variables had contributed as much as 47% to the LLS employment of the population.

The status of language learning motivation as the main predictor, which had provided the greatest contribution (32.9%) to the LLS employment level, is in line with the study of Ho (1998) and Schmidt and Watanabe (2001). The Multiple Regression test result by Ho (1998) in an LLS research on 372 students of the National University of Technology in Taiwan showed that the language learning motivation was a major contributor to the LLS employment level. Schmidt and

Watanabe's (2001) study on 2089 students of five foreign languages in University of Hawaii also found that the language learning motivation was the strongest predictor of LLS employment. Thus, the results of these studies have proved the significant influence of the language learning motivation on second/foreign language learning generally and the employment of LLS specifically. Furthermore, language achievement was the second biggest contributor (10%) to the population's employment of the LLS. This finding is in line with the results of Multiple Regression tests performed by Lan (2005) in his research on 1,191 students who learned English in six primary schools in Taiwan. His research showed that language achievement was the second variable, after the attitude of love to learn language factor, which had contributed the most to the population's employment of LLS. These findings support several other studies (Bremner, 1999; Ellis, 1994; Green & Oxford, 1995), which have postulated language achievement as a contributing factor to LLS employment. Total hours of learning the Arabic language outside the classroom per week were also listed as a predictor variable with a contribution as much as 7% of population's employment of the LLS. Students' period of life outside the classroom is much longer than the learning period in the classroom. Therefore, they have much more opportunities to learn the language outside the classroom. The longer a student used his time for learning activities, the more learning strategies could be practised. Therefore, it is not

surprising that the total hours of learning the Arabic language outside the classroom have become a contributing factor and predictor to the employment of LLS as found in this study. Father's level of education was the last predictor variable that contributed 1.1% to the population's employment of LLS. The small contribution of this variable was also shown by the finding in Lan's (2005) study. In this present study, father's influence on the employment of LLS was greater than that of the mother's, which may be caused by the father's participation in the children's learning, provision of facilities, encouragement and father as a role model based on his education's level was rather frequent and outstanding.

The result of the Multiple Regression analysis of this study had rejected the assumptions of mother's level of education and total family income as the predictors for the employment of LLS among the population. This finding is in line with the study of Lan (2005), which showed that mother's level of education was not a contributor to the employment of LLS. He stated that the strong correlation between the level of education of the mother and father might be the reason that caused the mother's educational level to have become insignificant in ANOVA and the Multiple Regression analysis. In other words, the mother's level of education was equally high/low with the father's. Total family income was not listed as the significant contributor to the employment of LLS, but it is expected to have had an indirect role in the employment of LLS. Learning needs

and facilities provided by the families based on what they can afford are related to the students' motivation level. Numerous and various learning facilities could increase students' motivation in learning language. Therefore, this motivation will increase the employment of LLS among those students (MacIntyre, 1994; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Okada *et al.*, 1999). Hence, the total income itself does not contribute directly to the increase of LLS employment. In fact, total income contributes through motivation, learning activities and so on.

CONCLUSION

This study proposed important information on the factors that influence the employment of LLS by Arabic language students from religious secondary schools. Although this study focused on a specific group of respondents, the findings provide valuable input to the field of Arabic language learning in particular and LLS in general. This study demonstrated theoretical implications by showing that the LLS field is centred on the cognitive and social cognitive theories. According to cognitive theory, the application of LLS could be seen to start from inner aspects involving biological and maturity elements to external aspects. On the other hand, the social cognitive theory sees the application of LLS ranging from external to internal aspects through internalisation. This aspect has been demonstrated when this study showed that the level of language achievement (representing elements of cognitive theory) and motivation, total learning hours and father's level

of education (representing element of social cognitive theory) were among the factors that contributed significantly to the employment of LLS.

From the aspect of pedagogical implications, responsible parties for language education need to increase the level of these factors. The status of motivation as the major contributor to the employment of LLS in this study showed that it is a factor that should be taken seriously. Hence, programmes and environments that could enhance language learning motivation should be planned properly. Total hours of learning language outside the classroom should also be increased. This can be done by planning schedules and designing language tasks that need to be completed by the students outside the formal learning period. Students should be given exposure to research findings, which revealed that the language learning process would be more effective when the formal learning period of one hour is followed by three hours of language learning outside the classroom (Nunan, 1999). The schools or teachers need to be wise in manipulating the elements available to those factors. For example, learning strategies that are often used by effective students should be taught to other students as well. Awareness workshops on the importance of the relationship between language achievement and the employment of language learning strategies should also be held regularly. Parents should be made aware of their responsibilities in their children's language learning. They should provide learning facilities, teach

their children, provide reinforcement and solve the children's learning problems. Their contribution to these activities will give students the opportunities to learn language and to practise the language learning strategies in a more frequent and effective manner.

Given the difference in students' background is one of the factors affecting the selection and the employment of LLS, language teaching should not ignore these elements. Good understanding of the influences of these factors on the employment of LLS will be able to make the training programmes of the employment strategy more efficient and suitable to students' needs and circumstances. Through this method, students will be given the opportunities to use a variety of strategies on a regular basis and they will move towards success in language learning in a simple yet fun manner.

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Stress Among Thai Farm Workers Under Globalization: A Causal Model

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ABSTRACT

This objective study was carried out to discover and model the causal relationships between globalization and stress. The study used a simple random sampling of 600 Thai farm workers. The variables measured were general demographic variables, globalization (i.e. transnational corporations, transnational practices and transnational economics), land holding, the Thai market, Thai state regulation, Thai state social protection and a self-analysed and self-evaluated stress test (SSST). The instrument was modified from the instrument used in past studies. The items were answered using a 4-point Likert-type of scale. However, SSST is a standardised instrument used in Thailand. It was developed by the Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. This instrument was employed to evaluate the respondents' levels of stress. It was assessed based on 20 items. Its scores were interpreted by stress level and points. It was found to have a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.91. Validity was verified by content and construct validity was done by questionnaire. These materials were sent to five professors in order to verify content and construct validity. Reliability was proofed by test-retest reliability. The reliability was

0.94. Data were analysed using the M plus path modelling software i.e. indirect and direct relationships. The results showed direct relationship between stress and globalization i.e. transnational corporations and transnational economics. The modelling revealed that globalization i.e. transnational corporations and transnational economics

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had a direct effect on farm worker stress, and transnational practices showed weak associations among Thai state regulation, Thai state social protection, Thai market, land holding and technology variables and their effects upon stress by indirect effect. The authors recommend that these issues should be studied further to confirm the validity of this relationship.

Keywords: globalization, stress, Thai farm workers, a causal model, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, or global capitalism, is a fundamental structural dynamic in the twenty-first century that is pervasive throughout the world, and driven by socio-economic, cultural, political, technological and biological factors (Robinson, 2004; Rosenau, 2003; Sklair, 2002).

The effects of globalization on health follow complex pathways, including changes in the economic growth and distribution of national income, economic instabilities, the partial presence or complete absence of access to the resources needed to support physical and mental health (Chiengkul, 2008; Mustard, 2004; Wilkinson *et al.*, 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The potential for globalization processes to effect negatively health outcomes both physical and psychological for different population groups in Thailand, notably rural agricultural workers, led to such workers

being one of six occupational groups for which the Thai government began mapping social protection strategies in 2007 (National Economic and Social development Board, 2004) to track the increase in stress through changes in the workplace (Aoki *et al.*, 2010; Department of Mental Health in the Ministry of Public health, 2003; Moustaka, 2010; Muntaner *et al.*, 2010; Ragins *et al.*, 2007; Vischer, 2007; Sukprasert *et al.*, 2003). In Thailand in 2008, workers in the non-formal sector accounted for 63.8% of the employed workers (Institute of Population and Social Research, 2009). Agricultural workers also accounted for the highest percentage (57.5%) of all workers; the next largest groups were workers in service industries, elementary occupations and the craft industry. There are three categories of workers in the agricultural sector: independent workers, contract farmers and casual laborers. A 2005 study (Social Security Office, 2005) revealed that more than 30% of agricultural workers were in debt. The amount of debt among agricultural workers increased significantly as compared to the level of household debt among workers in general.

In 2008-2009 in Thailand, a survey of approximately 52,000 participants reported major mental health problems in the country. The results showed that one fifth of the study participants reported the highest levels of stress, especially participants from the Central Region of Thailand (Chumratrithirong *et al.*, 2010). Thai farmers generally suffer many disadvantages in their lives such as a heavy debt load and a

decrease in their landholdings, to which the encroachment of international capitalism and state policies have contributed.

From previous research in other occupations it has been found that in general a factor of stress consists of: (i) the person and environment (Veldhoven *et al.*, 2002), (ii) expectation and intention (Ertel *et al.*, 2005; Johnston *et al.*, 2006; Isabelle *et al.*, 2005; Grzywacz *et al.*, 2009) and (iii) organisation of work and person (Hansez *et al.*, 2008; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2009; McClenahan *et al.*, 2007; Moustaka *et al.*, 2010). In addition, previous research among farmers found that the main factors of stress in general were a heavy debt load, environment change and a decline in number of landholders (Social Security Office, 2005). An important previous study among 200 Thai contract farmers under globalization in 2012 found that globalization had a direct effect on psychosocial stress (Kaewanuchit *et al.*, 2012).

The Operational Definitions of this Research

The operational definitions of this research consisted of globalization (e.g. transnational corporations, transnational practices and transnational economics), state regulations, state social protection, Thai market, technology, land holding and stress. Globalization means global capitalism or the global capitalist system that drives social, political, economic and cultural-ideological processes worldwide. It is composed of transnational corporations, a transnational capitalist class, transnational

practices and transnational economics. Transnational corporations are the multinational organisation and the Thai capitalist, who have increasing control over the working conditions of Thai farmers, possessing the means of production and the labour process. Transnational practices are the culture-ideology of consumption in the world capitalist system through the mass media. Transnational economics were the investment about agriculture in government and Thai farmers through economic rules (e.g. IMF, State regulation associated with FTA policy). State social protection is related to occupational insurance (e.g. a good price for insurance). The Thai market consists of the prices and profits of agricultural products resulting from fierce competitive markets in Thailand. Land holding was the size of land holding (in square metres). Technology is associated with water used for cultivation and the foreign technology used to help cultivate planning and conduct artificial rain management for the governmental sector. Stress is the result from psychosomatic symptoms related to stress.

Hypothesis for this Research

The working hypothesis for this research was that the decrease in the number of landholders, the increased control of scientific management, the incremental integration of local and global markets for the trading of goods affecting the price and profit of agriculture goods, and the negative feedback of state regulations and state social protection under globalization, for instance transnational corporations, transnational

practices and transnational economics, have all led to stress among Thai farm workers.

Concepts Used in this Research

For this research, we chose a political economy focused on the occupational health perspective to examine the causal relationship between globalization (e.g. transnational corporations, transnational practices and transnational economics) and stress among Thai farm workers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Setting and Participants

This study was a survey of 600 Thai farm workers who were in transition from an existing production system to a new one. The participants were from different sub-district locations in Nakhon Pathom Province in the central Thailand.

Research Sampling Method and the Sample Size

The sampling method was simple random sampling. The sample frame population did not differ; all members of the population had an equal chance of being picked. The sample size was calculated by Taro Yamane formulations. This calculation showed that the sample sizes should be 397 cases at a 95% confidence level. In this research, the total sample size was 600 cases.

Research Instruments

Perceived stress among Thai farm workers was measured using the Self-analysed &

Self-evaluated Stress Test (SSST), which is a standardised instrument in Thailand. It was developed by the Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand (Department of Mental Health in the Ministry of Public Health, 2008). This instrument was employed to evaluate the respondents' levels of stress. Level of stress was assessed based on 20 items i.e. can't sleep because of worry or anxiety; feeling annoyed or irritated; feeling too tense to do anything; confused; avoid meeting people; having migraine or headache; feeling sad and blue; feeling hopeless; feeling useless; being nervous most of the time; can't concentrate; feeling so exhausted that you can't do anything; feeling too bored to do anything; having strong and fast heartbeat; having trembling voice; twisted lips and shaking hands when feeling angry; too concerned about making mistakes when doing something; feeling pain or tension in the back, shoulder or back part of the head; feeling nervous when facing unfamiliar situation; feeling dull or dizzy; and feeling less aroused by sex. The items were answered using a 4-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often and 3 = regular). The scores of SSST were interpreted by stress level and points. These were divided into five levels: 0-5 points (less stress than a normal level), 6-17 points (stressed at a normal level), 18-25 points (moderate level of stress), 26-29 points (high level of stress) and over 30 points (severe stress). The SSST was found to have a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.91.

The general demographic instrument was based on 17 questions i.e. sub-district; age; status; number of children; education; ownership of a house; selling land; income in 2000; income in 2010; family expenditure; healthy; mental illness; physical illness; treatment with drugstore; the amount of land holding in 2000; the amount of land holding in 2010; and stress score. This level of measurement was nominal, ordinal and interval scales.

Globalization e.g. transnational corporation, transnational practices and transnational economics, land holding, technology, Thai market and state regulation and state social protection instruments were modified from the instrument used in past studies (Chiengkul, 2008; Kaewanuchit *et al.*, 2012).

The globalization instrument was divided into three variables i.e. transnational corporations, transnational practices and transnational economics.

The transnational corporation variable was based on four dimensions: (1) the dimension of multinational organisation i.e. the combined investment of multinational corporations and Thai capitalists that created many agri-businesses in your region in 2000-2010, (2) the dimension of controlling i.e. the combined investment of multi-national corporations and Thai capitalists that created many agri-businesses in your region in 2000-2010 and your produced agro-products to supply orders from multinational companies in 2000-2010, (3) the dimension of the possession's means of production i.e. as an owner you

feel your production decreased by a large amount in 2000-2010, (4) the dimension of labour process i.e. nominee companies of multinational corporations in Thailand employed agricultural professionals that taught how to produce your products so as to satisfy local and global markets in 2000-2010; multi-national corporations in Thailand cared more about new agricultural products, their quality and freshness than about farmers standard of living and quality of life; increased labour processes to produce agricultural goods resulted in job stress in 2000-2010; you have been responsible for many agricultural jobs in order to send your product to the competition in free market.

Transnational practices were related to the dimension of ideology of cultural consumption through media i.e. the government supported nominee companies of multinational corporations in Thailand through advertisements of agricultural tools and goods in 2000-2010; you tried to find money to buy foreign agricultural through the media in 2000-2010; government officials used media to influence you to buy modern agricultural tools from abroad during 2000-2010.

The transnational economics variable was based on two items i.e. you worked and earned money to repay foreign financial institution and/or other capitalist both government and private section in 2000-2010; foreign agricultural products sold in Thailand in 2000-2010 resulted in reduced production for you and indebtedness to national and intentional financial institutions. These items were answered using a 4-point

Likert-type of scale of none, coded as 1, less (2), moderate (3) and most (4). The items of transnational corporations, transnational practices and transnational economics were summed together in each variable to form an additive index that had Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of 0.93, 0.88 and 0.89, respectively.

The state regulation instrument was based on three items i.e. you felt job stress when you were controlled by Thai government regulation; FTA policy, in the period of 2000-2010; how much have free trade agreements in Thailand increased the influence of trade corporations over your own work in the period of 2000-2010?; has this influence been positive or negative for you in period of 2000-2010?. These items were answered using a 4-point Likert-type of scale. The items of state regulation were summed together in each variable to form an additive index that had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.95.

State social protection was based on two items i.e. you feel that the agricultural bank of the Thai government could not help your farming from free trade agreement policies in 2000-2010; you felt job stress when you were controlled by Thai government regulation; FTA policy, in the period of 2000-2010. These items were answered using a 4-point Likert-type of scale of none (coded as 1), less (2), moderate (3) and most (4). The items of state social protection were summed together to form an additive index that had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80.

Thai market was based on two items i.e. nominee companies of multinational companies in Thailand controlled prices to decrease prices for your agricultural products in 2000-2010; nominee companies of multinational corporations in Thailand, including Thai foreign capitalists, controlled prices when buying and selling outputs and inputs with you, and hence influenced profits. These items were answered using a 4-point Likert-type of scale of none (coded as 1), less (2), moderate (3) and most (4). The items of Thai market were summed together in each variable to form an additive index that had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89.

The technology instrument was based on three items i.e. you feel that during 2000-2010 you were so busy with your agricultural work that you didn't have time to eat; you will plan cultivation differently in the future; you feel stressed because of the control of water (damp, artificial rain, and water conservation); and technological management systems provided by the private and government sectors for agricultural production in 2000-2010. These items were answered using a 4-point Likert-type of scale of none (coded as 1), less (2), moderate (3) and most (4). The items of technology were summed together to form an additive index that had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.95.

The land holding instrument was based on the number of land holdings (square metres). It was found to have a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.82.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Validity was verified by content and construct validity. The materials of this research were questionnaires about general data and stress of Thai farm workers under globalization. These materials were sent to five professors in order to verify content and construct validity. Reliability was proofed by test-retest reliability. Then, questionnaires were estimated for reliability of no less than 0.8 by SPSS/PC+ for Windows. The results were analysed in order to improve the tools. It was found that respondents understood every question, and the reliability was 0.94. Then, trained health volunteers of each sub-district in Phutthamonthon district, Nakhon Pathom Province, helped to collect the data through the process of teaching and approaching respondents, explaining about the questionnaires and giving consent forms to respondents. After that, the researcher/health volunteers gave questionnaires to respondents and asked them to return the questionnaires on the appointed date. The questionnaires were collected in a box that the researcher and health volunteers had prepared for the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analysed by minimum, maximum, percentages, means and standard derivations using the SPSS programme. The relationships of stress among Thai farm workers under globalization were verified by Path analysis using the M plus programme (version 5.2). Lists of indices for measurement of fit of the Path model in the M plus programme were Chi-square,

while degree of freedom $\neq 0$, p-value > 0.05 , the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.95 , Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08 , and Standardised Root-Mean-Square Residual (SRMR) < 0.05 .

RESULTS

The respondents comprising 600 Thai farm workers completed all the questions in the questionnaire. Their demographic results are shown in Table 1.

As shown in Table 2, the age distribution was positively skewed (0.5). This meant that there was a higher proportion of younger farm workers in the sample and it also had negative kurtosis (-0.4). The means and standard deviations for the amount of land holdings in 2000 and 2010 were represented that they occurred from a downward slide for land ownership. Both distributions i.e. land holding in 2000 and 2010 showed positive skewedness (0.40 and 1.98). Kurtosis for land holding in 2000 and in 2010 was -1.17 and 4.37, respectively. It indicated a high proportion of the landless and dispossessed. The mean and standard deviation for the stress score variable was 28.17 ± 0.99 . Twenty-six and 29 points were the minimum and maximum for the stress scores among farm workers, respectively. Both the skewedness and kurtosis of the distribution of stress scores were negative: -0.97 and -0.19, respectively. It indicated a very high preponderance of high stress scores.

It was found that the means and standard deviations for the amount of land holdings among Thai farm workers had decreased

Table 1
General Demographic Results Among Thai Farm Workers (N=600)

Background	%
Subdistrict : Salaya	52
Status: Marital status	74
Number of children: Two	52.5
Education: Pre-high school	33.5
Ownership of a house: Rented house	73
Selling land	73.5
Income in 2000: 50,000-100,000 baht/ year	59
Income in 2010: 50,000-100,000 baht/ year	82.5
Family Expenditure: high	79
Healthy: poor	65
Mental illness: Anxiety and stress	73.5
Physical illness: Hypertension and diabetes mellitus	68
Treatment with drugstore	46

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics Of Measures Among Thai Farm Workers (N= 600)

Variable	Minimum (Min.)	Maximum (Max.)	Mean (M)	Standard derivations (S.D.)	Skewedness	Kurtosis
1. Age	30	60	43.99	5.3	0.5	-0.4
2. The amount of land holding in 2000 (square meters)	0	32,000	9600.36	9608	0.4	-1.17
3. The amount of land holding in 2010 (square metres)	0	16,000	1628	3201.24	1.98	4.37
4. Stress score	26	29	28.17	0.99	-0.97	-0.19

by -6401.56 square metres \pm 6401. The results showed that some of the postulated relationships were significant at the $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed t-tests), although there was no significant difference in reported stress level. The most significant relationship was between the technology variable under job environment, with the transnational economics variable under

globalization ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$). The least significant relationship was between the technology variable under job environment, with the state social protection variable under Thai state policies ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$).

Based on the goodness of fit indices among Thai farm workers, the model showed a close fit. R square, or percent of variance explained, by the market, state

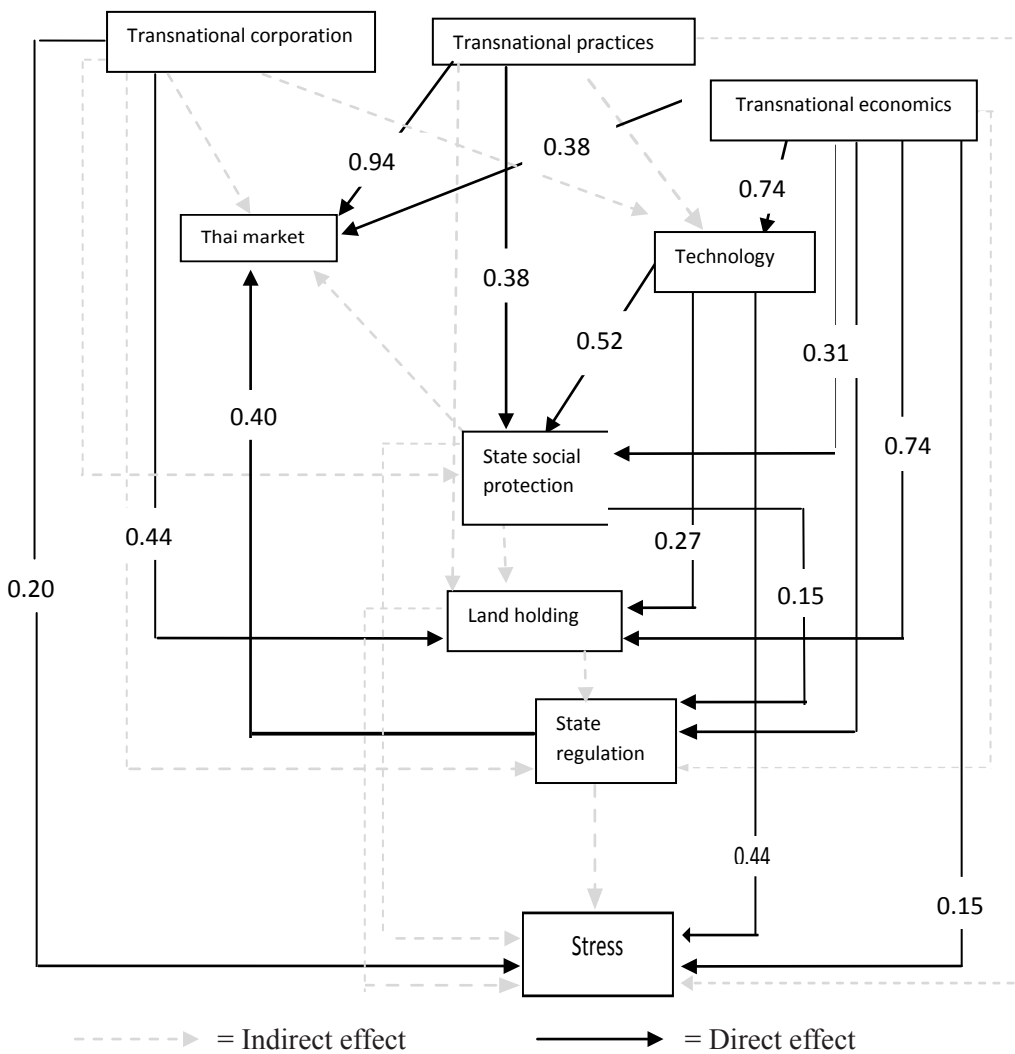


Fig. 1: Path model of stress among Thai farm workers (N= 600).

regulation, state protection, land holding and technology variables were 0.71, 0.22, 0.26, 0.33 and 0.44, respectively ($p < 0.05$), but R square for the stress variable was significant at $p < 0.05$ ($r = 0.17$).

The results of standardised direct, indirect and total effects of the variables on stress among Thai farm workers found that both state social protection and technology had direct effects on state

regulation, with standardised regression weights of 0.15 and 0.44. Globalization (e.g. transnational practices and transnational economics variables) and technology had direct effects on state social protection, with standardised regression weights of 0.38, 0.31 and 0.52. Transnational practices, transnational economics and technology showed standardised total effects (0.44, -0.44 and 0.27, respectively)

on land holding. Transnational economics had a direct effect on technology with a standardised regression weight of 0.74. Finally, transnational corporation and transnational economics had direct effect on stress with a standardised regression weight of 0.2 and 0.15, respectively. These results are displayed with the path coefficients for the relationships in Fig.1.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Our hypothesised model displayed a positive feedback relationship between globalization and variables affecting Thai farm workers. This means that transnational corporations and transnational economics had a positive effect on stress (Fig.1). However, the state social protection variable and the land holding variable both had indirect effects on the stress. But land is the important natural resource for Thai farmers. In the past, Thai farm workers had a lot of land. At present, Thai farm workers are selling land to the capitalist class, so that their land holdings have decreased. This has had an influence on stress (Table 1 and 2). This research found that 75% of the respondents had poor health and it appears that stress is the most frequent illness.

The study also confirmed that there had been an influence on stress resulting from the change of employee's conditions (market, land holding, technology, state regulation and state social protection) under globalization (transnational corporations, transnational practices and transnational economics) through questions about exploitation, pressure and dehumanisation,

indirectly (i.e. nominee companies of multinational corporations in Thailand employed agricultural professionals that taught how to produce your products so as to satisfy local and global markets in 2000-2010; you have been responsible for many agricultural jobs in order to send your product to the competition in free market; you tried to find money to buy foreign agricultural through the media in 2000-2010; government officials used media to influence you to buy modern agricultural tools from abroad during 2000-2010; the combined investment of multi-national corporations and Thai capitalists created many agri-businesses in your region in 2000-2010; you produced agro-products to supply orders from multinational companies in 2000-2010; foreign agricultural products sold in Thailand in 2000-2010 resulted in reduced production for you and indebtedness to national and intentional financial institutions). This is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Chiengkul, 2008; Goodman *et al.*, 2010).

The survey results from the questionnaire showed that among this sample of Thai farm workers, there was some degree of exploitation. The Thai state, in turn, has been a supporter of both the capitalist class and the farm workers, although it has been helping the capitalist class more than the farm workers. It appears that the intentions of the Thai government to promote the welfare of the wealthiest class in Thailand are indirectly associated with the exploitation, pressure and dehumanisation felt by the farm workers, and therefore

can be linked indirectly to stress. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Kaewanuchit *et al.*, 2012; Nirathron *et al.*, 2010). These results confirmed that globalization (e.g. transnational corporations and transnational economics) had been an influence on stress. But transnational practices, which were associated with mass media, had not had a direct effect on stress. This is inconsistent with the findings of the previous study (Chiengkul, 2008) that described globalization (e.g. transnational corporation, transnational practices and transnational economics) as being able to increase stress through changes among Thai farmers in the workplace.

According to the Political Economics perspective based on occupational health, production in a capitalist system is for the maximisation of profits (Navarro *et al.*, 2004). In the case of the farm workers in this study, that is reflected in the use of expensive technology to speed up production. This and other changes in the factors of production have created stress. The results of this research and previous studies have clearly indicated that the increasing power and reach of the transnational corporations to maximise profits have given rise to stress (Hawkes *et al.*, 2010).

In this study (Fig.1), a direct link was not found between Thai state regulation and Thai state social protection and stress. This also applied to higher profits from the Thai labour market, which derives from work between the capitalist class and contract farmers. These results indicate that farm workers did not get

an advantage from their cultivation and Thai state regulation, and that state social protection has not sincerely helped them by following a political economy based on the occupational health perspective. The state supported both the capitalist class and the farm workers. However, the state is a part of the capitalist class in Thailand. Thus, it seems to have helped the capitalist class more than the farm workers. From the research questionnaire it was found that the exploitation, pressure and dehumanisation from the capitalist class, state and mode of production with contract farmers are in part linked indirectly to stress, according to the previous studies (Chiengkul, 2008; Nirathron & Chamkajang, 2010; Sally, 2007).

Several limitations apply to this study, which are as follows: (i) It associates psychological and physical stress with the stress measurement employed in the SSST of the Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. The level of reported stress was remarkably high in this sample (Department of Mental Health in the Ministry of Public Health, 2008), and the stress measurement instrument did not include variables related to society under globalization. The suggestion to overcome this limitation should be to adapt the contents and specifically to customise the stress measure to capture better stressors associated with globalization. (ii) It is not possible to assess exactly how representative this sample of Thai farm workers is of a larger population of Thai farm workers, and whether it would be appropriate to

generalise among all farm workers in the same province, the Central Region, or even Thailand as a whole. The suggestion for overcoming this limitation should be to add to the number represented in the sample frame of the population, and perhaps employ the expertise of demographers to develop a stratified, random sample with demographic characteristics matching the region. (iii) Some questions were asked with a level of complexity that was likely too difficult for the Thai farm workers to understand, especially the questions related to globalization. The Thai farm workers have a relatively low level of education, and some of the questions used very formal language. In addition, the Thai farm workers did not have the opportunity to ask for clarification or receive feedback when completing the questionnaire.

The main strength of this study included a strong comprehensive conceptualisation that focused on a causal model linking globalization to stress among Thai farm workers. It dealt with globalization at a macro level and stress at a micro level. The major recommendation is for the Thai government to further the prevention of stress among Thai farm workers by developing a new social protection policy in order to have social health equality. To follow up after this study, the authors suggest further investigation as: (i) a study should be conducted to compare the differences between different farmer groups to find out whether there are similar or different levels of stress and other indicators of poor

mental health among other occupations in Thailand, as well as other Southeast Asian countries under the same globalization, state, market and job environments. (ii) A cohort study should be done to compare the accuracy of the results that is confirmed by a qualitative study. (iii) Further research will require the development of alternative strategies for validating measures of stress among farmers and farm workers under globalization. (iv) Stress due to other factors (e.g. individual factors, family factors, societal factors such as drug use, etc.) should be obtained to better explain and to find out the relative importance of risk factors, stress in workplace under globalization and daily life in other populations.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that globalization (i.e. transnational corporations and transnational economics) had a direct effect on stress, according to the M plus programme. The other variables revealed a weak association with stress, through the theoretical factors of exploitation, economic pressure and dehumanisation by indirect relationship. Besides, this causal model under globalization is an appropriate model to show the stress among Thai farm workers because the final path model focused on goodness of fit index among Thai farm workers, and it indicated a very close fit. The authors recommend that these issues should be studied further in subsequent studies to confirm the validity of this relationship.

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Exploiting the Potential of Project-Based Instruction Benefiting from Authentic Atmosphere, Authentic Materials and Interactive Multimedia: An Attempt to Improve Students 'English Proficiency'

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ABSTRACT

In this globalization era, especially in Indonesia, having the capabilities of English and technology is important for students to compete in the global employment market. The role of teaching strategy that is implemented adequately in the class would be really quite influential on the learning process. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which a project-based instruction programme could improve students' oral communication skills. The project was wrapped in a package of business meetings that are equipped with real-life cases related to business that learners were going to face. At this stage, the situation was made a lot like natural situation, including the costumes and the seats arrangement, aided with various interactive multimedia. The study is an action research using a total of 192 students from the Accounting Department of the State Polytechnic of Malang, Indonesia as its subjects. The study covered a period of two semesters. Methods of data collection included interviews, questionnaire, direct observation, and a pretest. Results of the study showed a great improvement on the students' oral communication skills. It was assumed that the project-based instruction programme has been implemented successfully..

Keywords: Project-Based Instruction, Authentic, Atmosphere, Materials, Interactive Multimedia

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INTRODUCTION

There has been growing awareness among those who are concerned with education that colleges in Indonesia should be more oriented to meeting the demand of more competitive workforce from prospective

users. For this purpose, educational institutions should be able to produce professional human resources who can satisfy the demand of such workforces from global or multinational companies, in which the skills in international communication and technology are inevitable.

In this regard, teachers who are very important elements in the implementation of educational policy should be able to innovate a strategy to make it real because the teaching strategy used by the teachers have a direct effect on how much their students will absorb the given instructional materials. A lot of studies have been conducted (see for example, Thomas, 2000; Solomon, 2003) to determine the effectiveness of task-based instruction in improving students' communication skills. Among other, a study by Lee (2002) proves the effectiveness of task-based instruction, which is synchronized with electronic interaction in enhancing students' communication skills.

This project-based instruction was designed to link and match students as graduate candidates to the job employment world. In relation to this, the researchers decided to use "business meetings" project as a classroom activities taught in authentic atmosphere and materials assisted with interactive multimedia. The project-based learning model was particularly chosen with the following purposes:

a. To alter the focus of the teaching and learning processes, which have been so far more teacher-oriented to the one which is more students-oriented.

b. To integrate the issues and practices in the real world into a classroom instruction.

c. To employ an innovative approach in evaluation. The kind of evaluation considered to be appropriate for the project-based learning is multiassessment - an evaluation that focuses on both products and process.

The project-based learning will be effective if it is supported with the use of instructional technology (Erick, 2004; Blumenfeld *et al.*, 1991). As implemented in the study, the use of technology in teaching and learning processes refers to that involving the combination of utilizing text, graphs, animation and audio-visual for communication. Technology for the students is intended to increase the quality of the project outcome. The outcome should not only be some sort of written reports but also some presentation packages, which were presented through power point, flash, corel, photoshop and other kinds of software.

Furthermore, Newberry and Hughes (2006, 194-195) rigorously explain that project-based learning will:

- **Help students develop skills for living in a knowledge-based world and society.** Solving highly complex problems that require students to have the skills on reading, writing and foundation skills (teamwork, problem solving, research, time management, information synthesizing and using technology tools).

- **Add relevance to the learning.** By bringing real-life context and technology to the curriculum through project problems, teachers encourage students to become independent workers, critical thinkers, and lifelong learner. Students learn to take responsibility for their own learning. They will form the basis for working cooperatively and effectively with others in their adult life.
- **Challenge students to high rigor.** When working toward a solution to a problem, students often find themselves acquiring higher levels of academic skills and knowledge than if they were taught such skills in isolation.
- **Promote lifelong learning.** Exposure to activities, projects and problems teaches students to take control of learning, their first step as life-long learners. Project-based learning promotes metacognition and self-knowledge.

Based on the above points, this study has the potential to bring about outcomes that have positive effect on improving the quality of instruction in the teaching and learning of English in Polytechnic, which in turn will improve students' oral communication skills.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The researchers used the Action Research Method proposed by Kemmis and Taggart (1989) to illustrate the process from planning, action, observation and reflection that formed spiral moments.

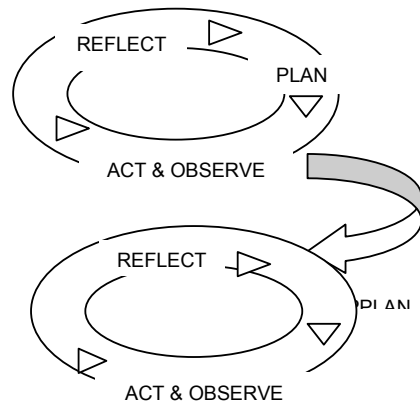


Fig. 1: The Steps on the Action Research

Research Subject and Setting

One hundred and ninety two (192) third and fourth semester students of 2012/2013 of the Accountancy Department of the State Polytechnic of Malang volunteered to be the subjects of study. The study was conducted in the language laboratory room at the institution. It took 37 meetings that were conducted twice in a week from 9 September 2012 to 05 July 2013, with each lasting around 90 minutes.

The project assigned the students to work in groups to perform as pseudo companies. There were eight classes with four groups representing four different companies in each class. Seven topics of business meetings held by the groups were set up as detailed in Table 1 below.

The situation of the business meetings that students held was made to resemble natural workplace situation, and this included the costumes and the seating arrangement that was aided with various interactive multimedia.

Table 1
Seven Topics Of Business Meetings Held By The Groups Were Set Up as Detailed Below

NO	PROJECTS Assigned
1	<p>"NEGOTIATION AND EATING OUT"</p> <p>creating the soft data and presentation on Profile of a Company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. History of the Company b. Vision and Mission c. Structure Organisation and the Job Description d. Sales and Product Analysis e. Marketing Strategies
2	<p>"BUSINESSCOMMUNICATION AND SETTING UP BUSINESS 1"</p> <p>creating the soft data and presentation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Budget estimation for a year b. Product in details and specifications c. Chanel and area distributions
3	<p>"BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AND SETTING UP BUSINESS 2" creating the soft data and presentation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.The design, the quality of the product and the process b.the price decision c. the brand legalization d. the electric advertisement and brochure
4	<p>"CREATING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS" creating the soft data and presentation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the source of a company's problems, such as; financial problem, corruption, fire, new director-new policies, hijacking, contamination effluent, vacuum position, etc b. the solutions taken
5	<p>"WHEN THE PRODUCT COMING ON THE MATURITY STAGE "</p> <p>creating the soft data and presentation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. modifying product b. developing human resource skills c. improving management d. doing efficiencies, product and sales analysis e. improving financial and marketing systems
6	DOING DISCUSSION & ARGUMENTATION ON " BUSINESS ETHIC
7	<p>"INNOVATION – EXPANDING THE BUSINESS"</p> <p>1. creating the soft data (power point programme) on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The first agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. discussing the excess fund 2. discussing the project build 4. discussing the location planned 5. discussing the facilities planned 6. discussing the design planned

Table 1 (Continue)

b.The second agenda: The problems facing during the project build (financial , natural disaster, material, transportation problems, etc.)
c.The third agenda: Grand opening of the project

Instruments

In order to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of the project-based instruction programme, several instruments were prepared, namely:

Table 2
The Instruments Used To Monitor The Implementation

NO	INSTRUMENT	FUNCTION
1	Pretest	to measure students' oral communication skills prior to the implementation of the programme
2	Project planning form,	for the students to write planned activities to complete each assigned project
3	Weekly report	for the teacher to record weekly and daily activities (progress report written by the students)
4	Observation check list	to monitor students' progress
5	Questionnaire	to obtain students' feedback on the project implementation

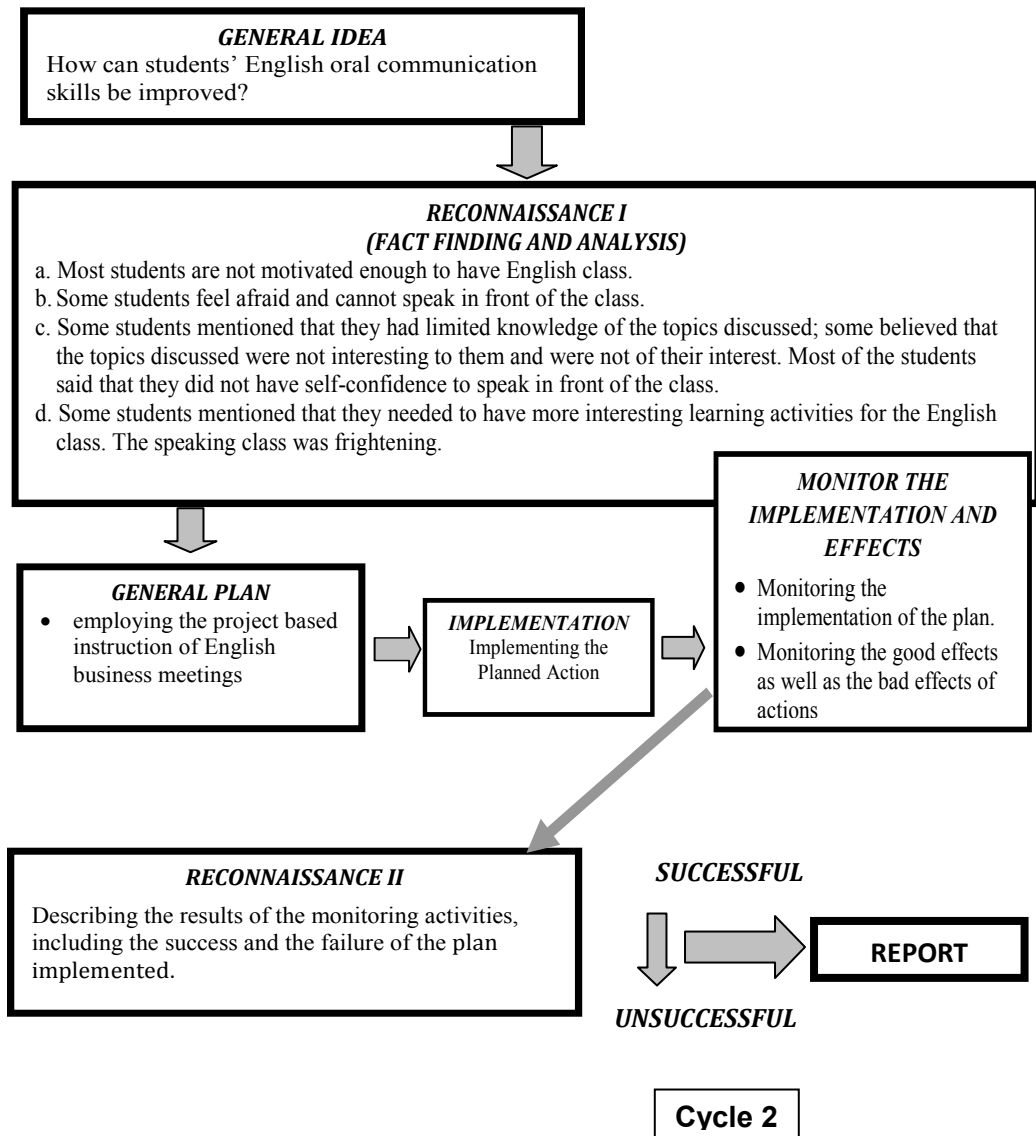
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the pretest showed students' low oral communication skills, showing an average score of 64 (of the maximum score of 10). Fig.3 shows the students' performances in the pretest and Projects 1 to 7. The students' performances in

Project 1 were shown to be lower due to several problems they claimed to have encountered at beginning of the semester such as low vocabulary, being afraid of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and difficulties in understanding the authentic materials.

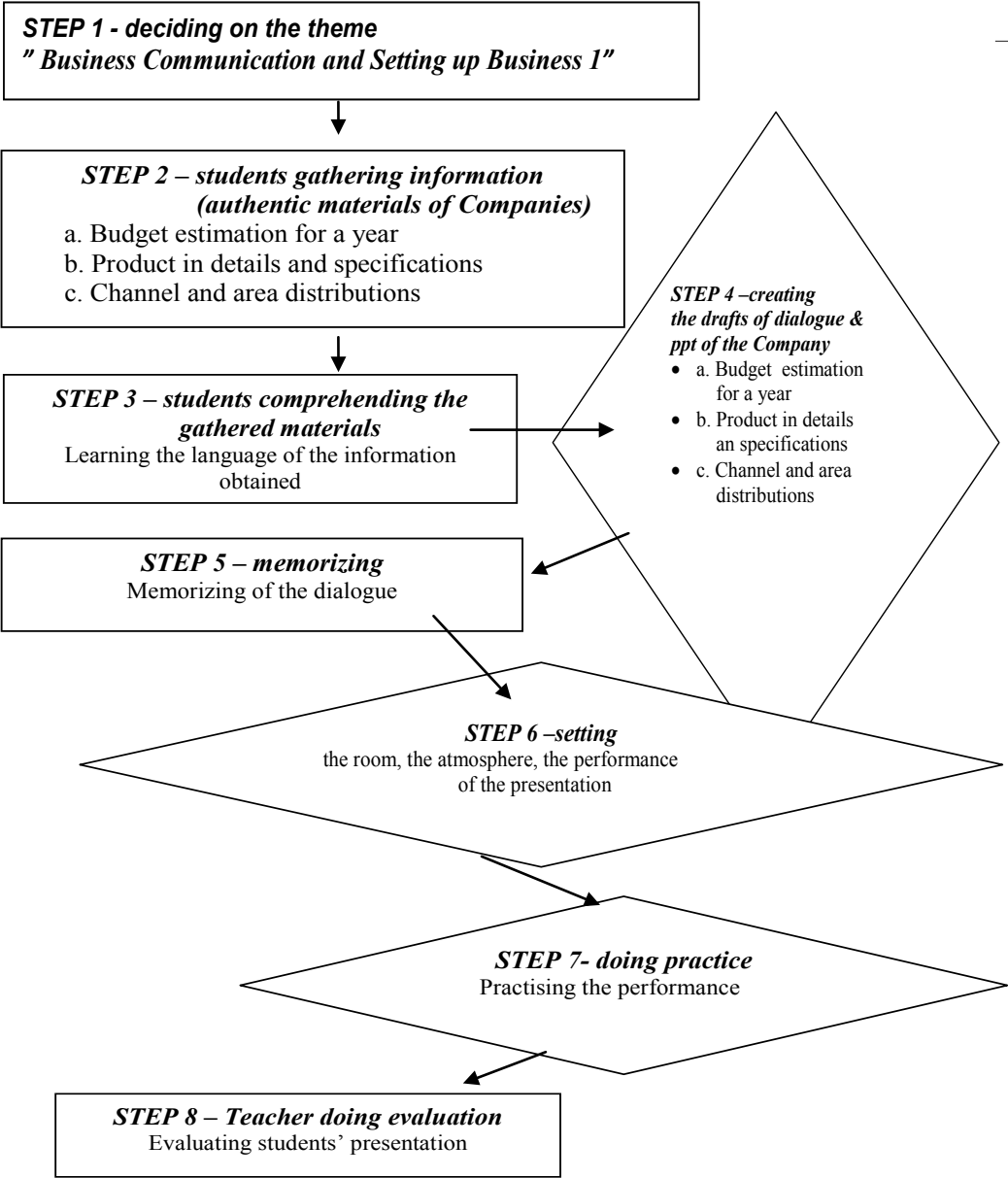
In order to cope with the problem regarding students' poor vocabulary, the researchers applied the technique of 'word memorization' in which students were suggested to memorize a list of new vocabulary taken from authentic materials that they have downloaded for the completion of the given project. Following word memorization activity, all the new vocabularies were directly implemented in the simulated business meetings. For a better performance of the business meetings, the students were suggested to have written preparation of the expressions to be used during the business meetings, and this was to be memorized as well.

As for the students' low self confidence, the researchers made attempts to boost their motivation to learn English. The students were convinced that mistakes in learning English were inevitable and that making mistakes should not be avoided. This is because making mistakes is beneficial for the students to learn from.



(adapted from Elliot, 1992)

Fig. 2: The Procedure of the Classroom Action Research (CAR)



(Adapted from Fredericka L. Stroller, 1997)

Fig. 3: The Examples of the Steps Taken in Designing The Project

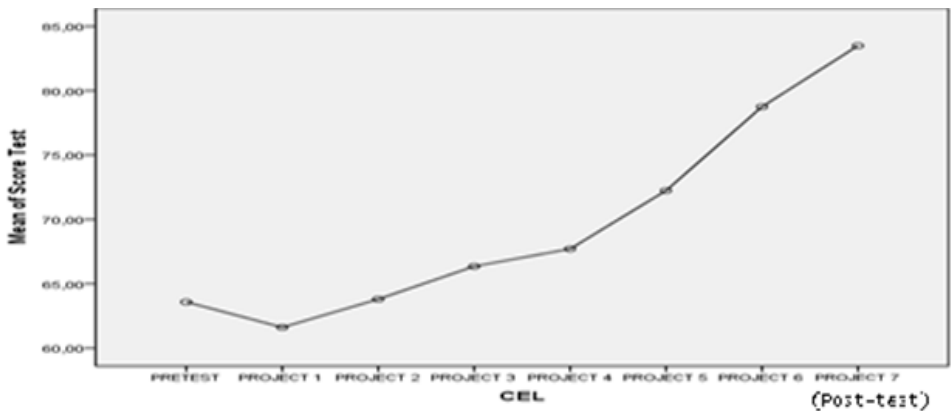


Fig.4: The Average Score of The Students'Improvement

It turned out that the 'word memorization' technique worked successfully, and this was proven by the students' improved performances in their subsequent projects (Projects 2 to 7). The students' increased motivation to learn English had apparently contributed to their improved performances, in that it reduced their being afraid of making mistakes. Thus, both teachers and students should have high motivation to reach their goals of learning, in this case, improving the oral communication skills. This is in line with Ur's idea (1996) that teacher's authoritative demand alone would not lead to higher motivation and better achievement. Teacher's authoritative demands should be accompanied with students' involvement in the decisions.

Another way to increase students' self-confidence and encourage risk-taking behavior in making mistakes during the simulated business meetings, the teacher-researchers attempted to have a closer relationship with students. Personal approach to students was done in order to attain a closer relationship. Consequently,

there seemed to be a closer relationship between the teacher and the students. In turn, the close and warm relationship between the researchers and the students increased students' motivation to complete the projects. Brown (2001) stated that students' increased motivation was also the result of students-teacher close relationship that was believed to be able to increase students' intrinsic motivation to learn.

As for students' problems in understanding authentic materials which they also found difficult to summarize, the researchers suggested the students to find simpler authentic materials. The difficulty level of the materials should be at the appropriate level and this could be detected from the number of difficult or new vocabulary items. Too many new vocabulary items may indicate materials that are too difficult to learn. Day and Bamford (2000) stated that a simple language should be considered as the solution when language learners found problems with difficult language in the reading text.

However, the researchers kept on suggesting that the students should continue using authentic materials for their subsequent projects as it was thought to be important authentic material for them to improve their proficiency and help prepare themselves for real use of the language. This is in accordance with one of the principles of the project-based instruction, which focuses on questions or problems that drive students to encounter (and to struggle with) the central concepts and principles of real-life cases (Blumenfeld *et al.*, 1991; Stepien & Gallagher, 1993).

In an attempt to develop students' ability to comprehend a text and to summarize it, the researchers suggested them to simplify the gathered authentic materials to be presented in the business meetings. Besides looking up for the meaning in dictionary, students were also encourage to ask for the teacher-researchers' assistance in comprehending the authentic materials. This technique of simplifying authentic materials seemed to be very helpful for the students to complete their projects as it helped them to understand new topics, long text, and difficult text. The students would develop strategies to comprehend different kinds of text and to orally communicate the contents to others.

Moreover, simplifying authentic materials was followed with the students having written preparation for the simulated business meetings. This helped them elevating their speaking fluency since they had already equipped themselves with the correct contents to express and the control of grammar and vocabulary to be used in

during the business meetings. Students' increased fluency, in turn, positively affected self-confidence. This is very prominent since increasing students' self-confidence is believed to be very essential in building their intrinsic motivation to learn (Brown, 2001).

Toward the end of the year, the researchers were more convinced that a project-based instruction was a good instruction model. The strategy leads the students to become more independent learners, to be more creative, to be more innovative, to outcome a product, to enrich the students' knowledge, to synthesize the authentic texts, to identify, to elaborate, and to become problem-solvers. Furthermore, this particular model had good management as the students were supposed to work hard, push their egocentric to become more tolerant, to think of others, to work in team, to develop self-discipline and to develop more creative and dynamic strategies. This is in line with what Newberry and Hughes (2006) said that when students experienced a problem during the process of their learning, they were more likely to make connection and thus see the value in what they were learning.

A project allows students and teachers to focus and to study on the central idea in depth. Content is more meaningful to students because it is real world learning and they can look at their work in a way that is interesting to them. Students can collaborate with each other to explore ideas. Student ownership is the true drive of project work. The process of working on a project will help students display independence and

construct their own knowledge through questions that they have developed with the class.

An effective assessment programme that had been created in this study was using multiple strategies to demonstrate the growth and to finish product that should be closely correlated to the stated goals. The fact that the students gained significant progress from the beginning to the end of their academic year indicates that the implemented strategy has helped them improve their oral communication skills.

The decision to allocate the project based instruction programme within two semesters was appropriate and sufficient since the period was sufficient enough to identify students' increased self confidence and improved motivation. The questionnaire distributed at the end of the academic year, to determine students' impression on the implementation of the model, revealed that the students felt motivated and satisfied with the outcome of their learning. The study also received positive responses from the students regarding the evaluation process which emphasized not only on the final product but also on the process the students were going through to prepare for the business meetings.

CONCLUSION

When implemented properly, the project-based instruction is proven to be an effective strategy to improve students' oral communication skills. This is due to the following factors:

- a. The high involvement of the students. As the students act as the creators of the project, they tend to be committed to do their best. This has been confirmed throughout the project preparation and implementation as well the reporting of the project.
- b. The warm atmosphere. The teacher placed her position as the facilitator and was more concerned with improving students' motivation, desirable group dynamic, their creativity, responsibility, tolerance, self confidence and discipline.
- c. Scaffolding power. The strategy leads the students to develop from more dependent learners to become more independent ones.
- d. The implementation of multi-assessment. This assessment focuses on both, the process, and the product.

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The Expectation and Satisfaction of the First Time and Return Tourists toward the Heritage Attractions in Melaka

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ABSTRACT

The heritage city of Melaka is one of the top most visited destinations in Malaysia by both domestic and international tourists. It has a mixture of heritage attractions that correspond to its status as one of the World Heritage Sites. Thus, the level of tourists' expectations and satisfaction needs to be analysed so as to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Heritage City of Melaka. This research is based on the expectation and satisfaction of both first time and return tourists of the Heritage City of Melaka. Questionnaires were used as a medium to acquire the relevant information about these levels from the tourists. The expectation and satisfaction of the tourists were measured based on the dimensional elements of heritage attractions. The results of this experiment show that there is a significant difference of expectation between a first timer and a return tourist towards art (music/ dance) at the significant level of $p < 0.01$ and six other elements at the significant level of $p < 0.05$, which include the historical buildings, traditional views, traditional handicraft, monuments, museums and traditional villages. For the satisfaction level, however, only traditional views in the study area have a significant difference between a first timer and a return tourist at the significance level $p < 0.05$. In conclusion, first timer and return tourists have different expectations but a similar level of satisfaction on the elements of heritage attractions in the Heritage City of Melaka.

Keywords: Expectation, Satisfaction, Heritage Attraction Attributes, First Timer, Return Tourist, Heritage City

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the sectors that contributes to the development of the country. This sector brings opportunities to the country and its people by providing employment opportunities through several sectors like

accommodation, food and beverages and transportation services. Besides, this sector also encourages new development that focuses on the infrastructure such as road, water services and sewerage. Consequently, it also increases the tourists' accessibility while travelling to a particular destination. As stated by Som and Badarneh (2011), tourism is able to attract many tourists through good planning while at the same time, it also encourages the exchange of foreign currency and provides employment opportunities. On the other hand, another component that contributes significantly to a destination is the attraction available at these places. This pull factor leads the tourists to decide on whether to visit a destination or vice versa. Therefore, it is important for decision makers and relevant authorities to improve and maintain the tourist attractions that can encourage tourists to visit a particular tourism destination.

The Heritage Tourism

Alzua, O'Leary and Morrison (1998) clarified that heritage tourism is one of the sectors that is currently growing rapidly. This sector has become one of the important segmentations in tourism marketplace (Sudipta, Sarat, & Babu, 2010). Thus, many countries focused on conserving and preserving their valuable heritage in order to obtain the world heritage site status. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an institution that is responsible in giving the world heritage status to any eligible countries. UNESCO (2013) reported that

there are 981 sites inscribed as world heritage sites. These include 759 cultural heritage sites, 193 natural heritage sites and 29 mixed cultural and natural sites. The status inscribed by UNESCO gives the opportunity for a country to promote their heritage site. Malaysia has five heritage sites inscribed as World Heritage Sites, namely, the City of Melaka and George Town City in Pulau Pinang, Kinabalu Park in Sabah, Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak and Lenggong Valley in Perak. Among these heritage sites, Melaka has shown an excellent performance through a high number of tourist arrivals since it was inscribed in 2008 (Chen, 2012). With reference to this situation, a study was conducted in Melaka World Heritage Site in order to evaluate the level of influence of these heritage attractions have on both domestic and international tourists to Melaka.

Melaka as World Heritage Site

The slogan used by the state government "Visit Melaka means Visit Malaysia" reflects the attractions available in Melaka. The uniqueness of the Heritage City of Melaka can be seen from its heritage elements such as its historical building, traditional villages, architectural buildings and monuments, and people of different cultures like Malay, Chinese, Indians, Baba and Nyonya, Chettis, and Portuguese (Melaka Historic City Council, 2007). Melaka's achievement as a World Heritage City and its many heritage assets have attracted many tourists from both inside and outside of the country to

come and visit this historical site. This achievement makes this study relevant because there are a few studies that have been conducted on tourists' expectation and satisfaction towards heritage attraction attributes in Melaka Heritage City.

In conjunction with the year 2013 which is the 5th anniversary of Melaka's recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is important for decision makers to identify both the weaknesses and strengths of Melaka Heritage City based on the tourists' expectation and satisfaction. In order to make sure that the tourists are continuously visiting the Heritage City of Melaka, the rates of expectation and satisfaction of tourists need to be taken into account so that the tourists will revisit this historical site in the near future. Thus, the results of this study will help decision makers to make improvements based on the issues identified. It was the aims of this study to evaluate the expectation and satisfaction levels of the first time and the return tourists towards heritage destination attributes of the Heritage City of Melaka. The key function is to identify the attributes and dimensions that the tourists are mostly satisfied with. Furthermore, it is crucial to answer whether there is any difference in the perception between first timer and return tourists towards the heritage destination attributes in Melaka Heritage City.

Tourism Destination Attributes

Destination attributes represent the identity of a place (Um, 1987). The attributes of tourism destinations are made of physical

settings and the level of development in a place. Meng and Uysal (2008) have identified six factors related to destination attributes in nature-based destinations, which are natural settings, quality and convenience, nature-based activities, recreational activities, activities for children and resort-related activities. According to a research conducted by Zhou (2005), ten destination attributes that represent the Cape Town are landscape, culture, entertainment, service, accessibility, attitude, safety, relaxation, climate and price. Similarly, Buhalis (2000) has presented six destination attributes, which are attractions, accessibility, amenity, packages available, activities and ancillary services. These attributes are used by tourists to attain information on the tourist destinations (Gaffar, Wetprasit, & Setiyorini, 2011). Therefore, the attributes of a destination that attract tourists to a particular destination were identified based on the information gained from travel magazines, websites and brochures. The quality of information provided for the attributes will influence the tourists' decision to travel.

In the Malaysian context, Shahrivar (2012) identified eight different dimensions (namely, natural factors, cultural factors, recreation and shopping facilities, accessibility, infrastructure, reception, services and cost) to represent the destination attributes of Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Melaka. The destination attributes used by some previous researchers were simplified by Huh (2002) by categorizing the attributes into four main dimensions, namely, general tour attractions, heritage attractions,

maintenance factors and cultural attractions. Thus, this study only focused on the heritage attraction elements because it was conducted at a heritage site and the elements play a significant role in influencing the tourists to visit a particular destination. In Melaka, the state government has come out with 12 subsectors that represent the attractions found in Melaka. These include heritage, cultural, recreation, sports, shopping, convention, education, health, agro, food, my second- home programme and youth tourism. This paper describes the heritage tourism attractions that bring Melaka to the international level.

Elements of Heritage Attractions

According to Buhalis (2000), an attraction can be defined as an element that relates to natural, man-made, artificial, purpose built, heritage and special events. Heritage attraction elements are therefore related to the past but still being preserved for the future generation. It can be architectural buildings, traditional handicrafts, historical buildings and folk arts. Peleggi (1996) studied on the relevance of Thailand's attractions to both domestic and international tourists by using traditional villages, monuments, museums and temples as the destination attributes. Sofield and Li (1998), however, had chosen several significant attributes, namely, historical sites, architecture, history, culture, folk cultural villages, folk arts (music, dancing and craft work), traditional festivals, historical events and beautiful scenic heritage for the case study of cultural tourism in China. Based on these previous

studies, the heritage attraction elements are based on available attractions in the research area. Lee (2009) used 11 elements of attraction to represent the Heritage City of Melaka, which are the monuments, historical sites, religious sites, museums, heritage craft centres, art galleries, traditional festivals, theatres, dance events, classical music events and cinemas. However, the elements used by Lee (2009) comprised of all the aspects of attractions. As for this case study, the elements of attractions were selected based on the previous research and the attractions were sorted based on the attractions to represent the heritage that could be found in the Heritage City of Melaka.

The Concept of Tourist Expectation and Satisfaction in Heritage City

Many researchers have conducted studies on tourists' expectations and satisfaction toward the cultural and heritage attributes. These include Huh (2002) in the Virginia Historic Triangle, Aksu (2010) in the Antalya Region of Turkey and Homsud et al. (2012) in the Historic Town of Ayutthaya and Lee (2010) in Melaka. The expectation and satisfaction relationship can be defined with the estimation made by the tourists while receiving the service (Oliver, 1981). According to Akama and Keiti (2003), expectation is the estimation made by consumers by using information from either advertisements or word-of-mouth perceptions by other consumers based on their previous trips and experiences. Meanwhile, satisfaction as defined by Aziz,

Ariffin, Omar and Yoon (2011), is the result from the experiences received by the tourists. Therefore, a study on the expectation and satisfaction of tourists has a significant role in the development of sustainable tourism of a particular destination (Lather, 2012). According to McQuilken (2000), there is a strong need to determine visitors' expectation level prior to the tourism experience and whether the performance of heritage destination attributes actually lives up to these expectations. Aksu et al. (2010) stated that it is important to understand tourists' expectation as it can help in improving products and services for the tourists. Failure to provide the desired quality is often identified as a factor that leads to poor performance in the tourism industry (McQuilken, 2000). The tourist's viewpoint of the destination's strengths can help destination marketing to focus on tailoring and offering services accordingly to satisfy their needs (Augustyn & Ho, 1998). However, these requirements should be in accordance with various categories of tourists who have different criteria of needs. This study is conducted to compare the level of expectation and satisfaction of first time and return tourists toward heritage attractions in the Heritage City of Melaka.

First Time and Return Tourists

A study by McKercher and Wong (2004) and Lau and Mckercher (2004) found that tourists were divided into two categories; tourists who visited for the first time and return tourists. Previous researchers found that return tourists are more satisfied with

their journey compared to the tourists who are visiting for the first time (Gitelson et al., 1984; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). However, in a research by McKercher and Wong (2004), return tourists are more likely to be less satisfied with the destination that they travelled to. A research by Crompton (1979) showed that first time tourists and return tourists are different in various aspects. These differences cover the demographic aspects, typography, destination perception, value (perceived value), and motivation to travel (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Lau & Mckercher, 2004; McKercher & Wong, 2004; Oppermann, 1998; Petrick, 2004; Shanka & Taylor, 2004). Understanding the differences can help in creating marketing strategies and effective tourism management such as coming up with motivation to travel and making theoretical decisions (Lau & Mckercher, 2004; Oppermann, 1997; Petrick, 2004). Therefore, the levels of expectation and satisfaction are the key indicators to identify deficiencies and advantages of a particular destination for the purpose of improving the development of the tourism industry. This research will help destination managers or planners to identify whether the given satisfaction level of product meets the expectations from the perspective of tourists or otherwise.

Objective of Research

There are two variables in this study; types of tourists as the dependent variable and dimensions of heritage attraction attributes as the independent variable. The tourists are

divided into two categories; the first time tourists and the return tourists. Therefore, the objective of this study was to determine the level of expectation and satisfaction of the first time and return tourists' based on their experiences while visiting the heritage attraction elements in Melaka.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative method through survey. Many past researchers such as Homsud et al. (2012), Lather et al. (2012), Salleh et al. (2011), Aksu et al. (2010) and Huh (2002) used the survey method to acquire responses on tourists' levels of expectation and satisfaction. The survey questionnaire was revised and constructed according to the research by Homsud et al. (2012) and Huh (2002). These research questionnaires consist of 2 main parts; the respondents' profile and heritage attraction elements. The respondents' profile covers four main items: their continent, gender, age and occupation. As for the levels of expectation and satisfaction, heritage attraction elements consist of ten chosen elements, namely, architectural buildings, historical buildings, traditional views, traditional handicrafts, art (music/ dance), monuments, local cuisine, local people, museums and traditional villages. These elements were chosen by referring to the following past researchers, Homsud et al. (2012) and Huh (2002). The levels of expectation and satisfaction of the tourists' experience were measured by using the five stages of Likert scale; very low (1), low (2), medium (3), high (4), and very high

(5) for each expectation, while, the level of tourist satisfaction was measured from very dissatisfied (1), dissatisfied (2), medium (3), satisfied (4) and very satisfied (5).

Data Collection

The survey form was distributed to 450 respondents who were visiting Melaka. The small response rate 35.7% was due to a high number of tourists from China who were unable to complete the form as they did not understand the English language very well. Besides, the enumerators were unable to approach tourists who were from a tour group because they had a pack schedule and could not be disturbed. As a result, a total of 161 respondents both from domestic and international tourists took part in the survey and gave their feedback. The survey forms were given out randomly at a few strategic locations within the core zone of the Heritage City of Melaka. Among the strategic locations are rest-stop at Dutch Square, along Sungai Melaka, Taman Merdeka, Porte De Santiago, Old Quarter of Melaka, Taming Sari Tower and accommodations. These are the locations that are most frequently visited by tourists. The time chosen for the survey was the peak season for tourists visiting Melaka, which is during the Chinese New Year. The tourists were asked whether they had any previous experiences in Melaka before the survey forms were handed over to them in order to ensure the tourists had prior visit of the research locations so that the outcome of the findings would meet the need of this research.

Data Analysis

A general picture of the respondents' social demography and the information on the level of expectation and satisfaction of tourists were analysed by using the descriptive analysis. In order to achieve the objective of this research, the researchers used the gap analysis and paired sample t-test. These analyses were used in order to identify the different perspectives of the tourists' expectation and satisfaction toward the heritage attraction elements in the study area. Furthermore, these analyses had also been used by previous researchers like Homsud et al. (2012), Lather et al. (2012), Salleh et al. (2011), Aksu et al. (2010), Tonge et al. (2007), Huh (2002) and McQuilken et al. (2000).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are made up of 3 main discoveries. First, the respondents' profiles which include the first time and return tourists' background information such as their continents, gender, age, and occupations. Second, the level of expectation, and finally, the level of tourists' satisfaction for both the first time and return tourists toward the heritage attraction elements in the Heritage City of Melaka.

Respondent's Socio-demographic Information

Mckercher and Wong (2004) stated that there is a difference between the social demography of the first time tourists and return tourists. However, based on this case, there is a minimal demographic difference

between the first time and return tourists. Overall, a total of 161 respondents took part in this research, in which 51.6% (83) respondents were first-time tourists and the remaining 48.4% (78) were return tourists. Cross analysis showed that the majority of first time tourists were international tourists who contributed to 81.9% (68), while the majority of the return tourists were domestic tourists who formed 79.5% (62). However, there was no significant difference in term of the percentage of genders listed for both tourist categories. The first-time tourists consisted of 59.0% (49) males and 41.0% (34) females, whereas the return tourists were made up of 57.7% (45) males and 42.3% (33) females. A previous research shows that age is the main indicator that differentiates between the first-time and the return tourists. This is because the first-time tourists are basically those of young generations whereas return tourists are usually the senior citizens (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Li, Cheng, Kim, & Petrick, 2008). On the contrary, in these research findings, it is proven that the age range of the first-time and return tourists are between 21-30 years old. The findings of this research are supported by the research conducted by Lee (2009) and Aziz et al. (2011) that in the Heritage City of Melaka, majority of the respondents are from the younger generation. Therefore, as a whole, Melaka could be classified as a destination that could attract younger generations to travel and understand the heritage of the city. In the aspect of occupation, most of the first-

Table 1
Social Demography of Respondents based on Tourist Category

PROFILE	DETAILS	TOURIST CATEGORY (RESPONDENTS)			
		First Time Tourist		Repeat Tourist	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Continent	Domestic	15	18.1	62	79.5
	International	68	81.9	16	20.5
Gender	Male	49	59.0	45	57.7
	Female	34	41.0	33	42.3
Age	20 and below	8	9.6	13	16.7
	21-30	47	56.6	47	60.3
	31-40	11	13.3	12	15.4
	41-50	10	12.1	3	3.8
	51 and above	7	8.4	3	3.8
Career	Academic/ Education/ Researcher	8	9.6	6	7.7
	Technical/ Engineering Buildings/ Architect/ Development	11	13.3	16	20.5
	Management	20	24.1	9	11.5
	Student	31	37.3	35	44.9
	Others	13	15.7	12	15.4

Table 2
Tourist Expectations towards Heritage Attraction Elements at Melaka Heritage City

Tourist/ Heritage Attraction Element	First Timers		Return Tourist		Df	t	p	Result
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Architectural Buildings	3.45	.967	3.72	.947	154	-1.786	.076	NS
Historical Buildings	3.40	.922	3.71	.841	151	-2.181	.031*	S
Traditional Sites	3.28	.966	3.63	.820	143	-2.334	.021*	S
Traditional Handcrafts	2.96	1.028	3.34	.946	141	-2.334	.021*	S
Art (music/dance)	2.90	1.130	3.39	.963	139	-2.816	.006**	S
Monuments	3.19	.792	3.51	.837	156	-2.479	.014*	S
Local Cuisine	3.48	1.011	3.68	.947	152	-1.259	.210	NS
Local People	3.23	.974	3.45	.923	140	-1.415	.159	NS
Museums	2.91	1.085	3.33	1.038	150	-2.444	.016*	S
Traditional Village	3.01	.971	3.38	.932	144	-2.314	.022*	S

*Significant level at $p < 0.05$; **Significant level at $p < 0.01$
S= Significant NS= Not Significant

time and return tourists are students. Table 1 shows the social demography based on the respondents' category.

Tourists' Expectations towards the Heritage Attraction Elements in the Heritage City of Melaka

Table 2 shows a detailed analysis on the expectation of first-time and return tourists toward the elements of heritage attractions in Melaka. Firstly, based on the paired sample t-test, the most significant difference between the first-time and return tourists is art (music/dance), with the significance level is $p < 0.01$. It is because this study was conducted during Chinese New Year holiday and therefore many cultural performances could be seen within the area of the Heritage City of Melaka. On the other hand, six out of the seven elements showed a significant difference between both types of tourists based on the value, $p < 0.05$. The differences are in the aspects of historical buildings, traditional sites, traditional handcrafts, monuments, museums, and traditional villages. Lee (2010) found that historical buildings play an important attributes in Melaka heritage site as the tourists have high expectations toward this element. Secondly, based on the mean value, each attraction has a higher expectation among the return tourist because they have experienced the city and are more familiar with the attractions in Melaka. In this case, their knowledge about the heritage attractions in Melaka is wide compared to the first timers. This result is supported by Lau et al. (2004) who stated that a first timer is a new visitor who intends

to explore a place and a return tourist is a tourist who is already familiar with the area. In addition, McKercher and Wong (2004) and Reid and Reid (1993) found that return tourists are more particular about a destination and it is based on their past vacation. On the other hand, the first timer is depending on external information. These characteristics caused the return tourists to have higher expectation than first timers who are new visitors.

Besides that, this analysis shows the difference in the expectations for the aspect of types of attractions. First time tourists have higher expectation towards the element of local cuisine ($M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.011$). A research by Enteleca Research and Consultancy Ltd (2001) showed that there are strong relationships between food, drink and cultural tourism. According to UNWTO (2012), food tourism gives an impact to the quality of tourists' experience. Thus, that is why the first timers tend to have higher expectations towards the local food. However, return tourists have different expectation, and this is more on architectural buildings ($M = 3.72$; $SD = .947$). The high expectation towards architectural buildings is because they are symbolic icons of a historical site. Based on the visual analysis that has been conducted, the core zone site consists of many historical buildings that are preserved to this day such as vernacular buildings, shop houses as early as the 1870s to the 1880s, shop houses during the early transition era between the 1900s and the 1940s, shop houses during the end of the transition era (strait eclectic), and art

deco shop houses between the 1930s and the 1960s (Melaka Historic City Council, 2001). Overall, first timers are more likely to expect more on the local food rather than the architectural buildings that have higher expectations among return tourists. This result is similar to a research by Aksu et al. (2010) that tourists have higher expectations towards Turkish Cuisine, Historic Sites and Cultural Values.

In addition, the analysis also indicates the element that has low expectation among the tourists. The first time tourists have low expectation towards the element of art (music/dance) in the study area. Observations show that there is not much in the elements of the arts in the research area. According to Lee (2009), the elements of music and dance are less of a tourist attraction in Melaka. By referring to Melaka's activities at the official portal of Melaka State Government (2013), annually, there are seven types of activities that involve music and dance. For example, Chinese New Year Festival, Menara Taming Sari Anniversary, Melaka Art and Performance Festival and Melaka World Music Festival. The festivals occur in particular months in a year. Therefore, they are influential and meet the expectation of first time tourists who are not aware of the events compared to return tourists who are already aware of the festivals celebrated in Melaka due to their past experience. For return tourists, their lowest expectations are the museums. From the observations, the highest demands for museums that are available in the study area were at St. Paul's Civic Hill. However, low expectation among

return tourists was because 79.5% of them are domestic tourists. According to Lee (2009), museums are not the top priorities among domestic tourists who visit the Melaka World Heritage Site. All in all, the level of expectation for the return tourists is higher than the first-time tourists.

Tourists' Satisfaction toward Heritage Attraction Elements in the Heritage City of Melaka

Table 3 shows the levels of satisfaction of the -time and return tourists in the study area toward the 10 heritage elements. Based on the paired sample t-test, only the traditional views have a significant difference between the types of tourists with the value $p < .05$. However, Lee (2010) found out that tourists are more satisfied with the historical buildings in Melaka. This is because the study by Lee (2010) was conducted 3 years ago whereas this paper shows the results of the research findings in the year 2013. Within the 3 years, many efforts have been made to preserve the heritage buildings like shop houses that are located in the old quarter of Melaka. This is supported with the findings by Wan Ismail (2012) who stated that the buildings within the heritage site of Melaka have gone through several phases of transformation. In the study area, the traditional views can be found in the Old Quarter of Melaka and in the traditional villages such as Morten village, Chitty village and Portuguese village (Melaka Historic City Council, 2007). The paired sample t-test shows that the mean for return tourists toward the traditional views is $M=3$.

Table 3
Tourists' Satisfaction towards the Heritage Elements at Melaka Heritage City

Tourists/ Heritage Element	First Timers		Return Tourist		Df	t	p	Result
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Architectural Buildings	3.92	.990	4.09	.982	150	-1.069	.287	NS
Historical Buildings	3.87	.914	4.01	.830	149	-1.019	.310	NS
Traditional Views	3.60	1.030	3.93	.918	143	-2.064	.041*	S
Traditional Handcrafts	3.40	1.028	3.68	1.012	136	-1.639	.104	NS
Arts (music/ dance)	3.16	1.231	3.50	1.138	134	-1.666	.098	NS
Monuments	3.57	.924	3.84	.784	148	-1.955	.052	NS
Local Cuisine	3.79	1.080	3.70	1.033	141	.555	.580	NS
Local People	3.65	1.103	3.71	.882	128	-.355	.724	NS
Museums	3.44	1.137	3.74	1.012	144	-1.653	.101	NS
Traditional Villages	3.41	1.123	3.70	.932	138	-1.689	.093	NS

*Significant level at $p < 0.05$; S= Significant NS= Not Significant

93; SD= .918, which is higher compared to first-time tourists (M=3. 60; SD= 1. 030). The vast difference is because return tourists have more experiences compared to first time tourists. According to Lau and McKercher (2004), first timers tend to have shorter stays at a destination. In addition, the result obtained is similar to the research done by Gitelson and Crompton (1984) and Kozak (2000) who found that the first timers are less satisfied compared to return tourists. This is because the first timers choose to travel to new places and search for new cultural experiences.

CONCLUSION

This research was done to study the differences between the expectations and satisfaction levels of first-time and return tourists toward the elements of heritage attractions found in the Heritage City of Melaka. The results of this study showed

the same findings as those of the past research in which the the return tourists of the Heritage City of Melaka were shown to have higher levels of expectations and satisfaction towards the heritage attraction elements in the study area compared to the first-time tourists. This is because mostly return tourists already have the experience of visiting heritage elements in the Melaka World Heritage Site compared to the first-time tourists. The findings of this research show that the expectations of first time tourists are focusing on the local cuisine whereas return tourists have higher expectation towards the architectural buildings. However, the satisfaction level of the first timers changes towards architectural buildings as well as the return tourists. The researchers hope that the findings will help the local authority to focus on maintaining the existing architectural building as it is favourite attraction among tourist. In

addition, this study has highlighted an essential finding that will help the local authority to enhance the heritage attractions available to ensure the revisit of the first-time and return tourists to Melaka. As for the future research, new research on expectation and satisfaction towards heritage attraction based on racial groups in Melaka could be conducted. The expected finding could help in diversifying the attractions in Melaka especially towards intangible cultural heritage. In conclusion, the experience affects both the first-time and return tourists' levels of expectation and satisfaction in the study area.

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Market-based Valuation Multiples: Evidence from Agribusiness Sector

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the choice of multiples in valuing the agribusiness firms in Malaysia from 2003 to 2009. The agribusiness industry typically employs homogenous business models and produces standardized products, thus rendering excellent empirical settings to reveal the value drivers of such traditional industries. It was discovered that commonly adopted methodologies in valuation multiples are associated with pitfalls which may hamper the reliability of the valuations. Our findings also showed that price-to-earnings multiple leads to the best valuation performance, while price-to-sales multiple produces the worst results. Moreover, this research showed that growth prospect is an effective control factor in multiples valuation.

Keywords: Agribusiness, plantation, corporate valuation, multiples, value driver

INTRODUCTION

In corporate valuation, academicians tend to favour Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) model, which is based on the intrinsic value concept over multiples as academic researchers and educationists have strong preferences in the fundamental valuation over accrual based valuation (Kaplan & Ruback, 1995; Imam & Shah, 2013). Nonetheless, multiples still have distinct advantages since it can be used to reflect market perception, to identify over-price (or under-price) securities, requiring less information and making fewer assumptions than DCF model.

Early works on valuation multiples have shown that there is a direct correlation between expected earnings per share and price-to-earnings multiples (Hammel &

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Hodes, 1967; Michaud, 1990). However, there are limits to how far the price-to-earnings can be used as the predictor of future earnings growth (Murphy & Stevenson, 1967). One major criticism of the literature on valuation multiples is that prior studies have failed to reach a conclusive evidence concerning the choice of suitable benchmark multiples, i.e., comparable firms and statistical methods (Lie & Lie, 2002). In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature to investigate how to increase the prediction accuracy of valuation multiples. Most studies, however, are concentrated in advanced economies (e.g., Cheng & McNamara, 2000; Lie & Lie, 2002; Herrmann & Richter, 2003; Park & Lee, 2003; Dittmann & Weiner, 2005; Schreiner & Spremann, 2007; Fidanza, 2008). On the contrary, there is only one related study focusing on the emerging economies (Minjina, 2009).

Evidently, there has been little discussion about selecting comparable firms in emerging economies. As a result, analysts often rely on the definition of comparable firms based on advanced economies when using valuation multiples in the contexts of emerging economies (Ivashkovskaya & Kuznetsov, 2007). Such approach has recently been challenged by Ivashkovskaya and Kuznetsov (2007) who showed that the prediction accuracy of multiples is significantly higher in the United States compared to Russia after the country risks have been corrected. Furthermore, the valuation accuracy of multiples tends to increase by using the

price-to-book and enterprise value-to-sales multiples. Surprisingly, price-to-earnings multiple delivers worst valuation accuracy. Our preliminary conclusion is that the performance of valuation multiples in emerging economies may differ from advanced economies.

Despite the fact that there is insufficient knowledge on using multiples in corporate valuation, multiples are still commonly used in equity valuation and pricing for initial public offering firms (Damodaran, 2005; Roosenboom, 2012). For instance, Japanese analysts generally prefer multiples for the ease and simplicity of corporate valuation compared to Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) model (Park & Lee, 2003). However, one should note that multiples are difficult to be implemented correctly because practitioners rely on subjective decisions to select comparable firms (Damodaran, 2005). Furthermore, the criteria to select comparable firms are difficult to be identified because each firm faces different business challenges and some have few revenue (or negative earnings). Many practitioners also lack good knowledge about the value driver of multiples, the methodology in choosing comparable firms and the defectiveness of traditional valuation multiples (Schreiner & Spremann, 2007).

Likewise, researchers in the area of corporate valuation consistently note that most of the literatures fail to provide a comprehensive framework to guide practitioners on how to use multiples effectively (e.g., Kim & Ritter, 1999; Bhojraj & Lee, 2001; Liu *et al.*, 2001;

Lie & Lie, 2002; Hermann & Richter, 2003; Dittman & Weiner, 2005; Schreiner & Spremann, 2007). In more specific, Schreiner and Spremann (2007) highlighted that future studies should consider the empirical setting of emerging markets to offer insights of valuation multiples. Thus, the aim of this article is to formulate a comprehensive methodology in valuation multiples in emerging economies. This study also considers the importance of industrial setting in valuation multiples. In particular, we chose agribusiness firms from Malaysia on the understanding that agribusiness sector is unique due to its homogenous business model in producing standardized commodity products.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, we intended to formulate comprehensive methodologies of multiples in corporate valuation to predict the market performance of Malaysian agribusiness firms. In this regard, the valuation accuracy of multiples relies on two important processes; estimate benchmark multiple and identify value drivers. First, the guideline in specifying comparable firms is paramount to obtain a reliable benchmark multiple. Second, the performance measure (or valuation accuracy) of multiples needs to be examined to identify the relative performance of multiples and the value driver of agribusiness firms.

Estimating the Benchmark Multiple

There are three approaches that are relevant to the estimating the benchmark

multiple in corporate valuation. The first utilizes the fundamental variables of DCF model, the second derived from multiple linear regression, and the third focuses on theoretical concepts of comparable firms.

The first approach in valuation multiples is to associate the multiples with fundamental variables in DCF model such as risk, expected growth rate and cash flow generating capacity (Damodaran, 2005). For example, an analyst can combine Gordon Growth Model (GGM) and Dividend Discount Model (DDM) to estimate the market value of equity, i.e., $\text{Stock Price} = \text{Expected Dividend} / (\text{Discount Rate} - \text{Growth Rate})$. The analyst can then integrate the estimated stock price with the actual value of the denominator (e.g., earnings for price-to-earnings multiple) to generate his own 'justified multiple' (or benchmark multiple). Then, the 'justified multiple' is compared with actual multiple to justify if the current stock price is over- or undervalued. However, this approach is exposed to similar weakness in DCF model, i.e., its sensitivity to the assumptions (Damodaran, 2005; Schreiner & Spremann, 2007). Another major disadvantage of such method is that the 'justified multiple' is assumed to be linearly proportional to the value driver (or denominator), and thus, it may not be unreasonable in practice (Schreiner & Spremann, 2007).

While the first approach relies almost exclusively on GGM and DDM models, the second approach utilizes multiple linear regression to estimate benchmark multiples. This technique estimates benchmark

multiple through the regression analysis between the market variable of multiple (i.e., dependent variable) and fundamental based variables such as growth, payout ratio and risk as independent variables (Bhojraj & Lee, 2001; Damodaran, 2005). The advantage of this approach is that it examines a cross-sectional effect of fundamental variables which is based upon actual data. Nonetheless, Damodaran (2005) found that regression approach fails to produce reliable and accurate benchmark multiples. The rationale for this is that the intercept and coefficient of variables and R-square (i.e., explanatory power) in the regression model fluctuate widely over time. The most likely causes of noisy benchmark multiples are the business cycle fluctuations and regression shortcomings such as multicollinearity issue and non-normally distributed samples. A similar empirical result was also discovered by Hermann and Richter (2003) whereby the findings indicate that the benchmark multiples derived from regression models generate higher valuation errors compared to the one using statistical estimator.

The third approach of selecting the benchmark multiple relies on theoretical concepts that assume comparable firms have identical fundamentals such as risk, growth and cash flow generating capacity; and hence the same benchmark multiple is produced within a certain period (Damodaran, 2005; Schreiner & Spremann, 2007). Traditionally, analysts view an average of multiples from the comparable firms to be a good proxy of benchmark multiple. The underlying assumption is that comparable

firms will have identical fundamentals. The performance of this approach relies on to what extent the fundamentals of comparable firms are identical to studied firms.

Clearly, the aforementioned discussions show that we have insufficient competence to estimate a benchmark multiple in valuation multiples. Our fundamental view is that using theoretical concepts to identify comparable firms with identical fundamentals is most appropriate to estimate benchmark multiple. This can be explained by the fact that the cross-sectional effect of the fundamentals will become closer in the fine-grained comparable firms. Furthermore, we believe comparable firms with identical fundamentals are commonly found in the agribusiness industry. The reason is that the agribusiness industry, unlike many other industries, does not require sophisticated production technologies and high R&D activities in business model.

To reiterate our point, we propose that a fine-grained comparable firm is sufficient in valuation multiples. However, to the best of our knowledge, there has been no discussion about how to choose the optimal number of comparable firms (Dittman & Weiner, 2005). In order to address the problem, two selection methods are adopted to select comparable firms. First, the traditional approach whereby the industry membership is used to select the comparable firm to estimate benchmark multiples. Second, the comparable firms are controlled based on proxy of growth in the same industry. In this context, return on equity (ROE) is the proxy of growth since the increase

of ROE leads to higher growth rate and vice versa (Damodaran, 2006). In more specific, we classified comparable firms into four groups which are: the average ROE of the firm is less than 5% as the first group; firms' average ROE is greater than 5% but less than 10% as the second group; firms' average ROE is more than 10% but less than 15% as the third group; the firms' average ROE is greater than 15% as the last group. This classification will produce better comparable firms based on the profitability growth rate.

Selecting Statistical Estimator for Benchmark Multiple

Recent studies of valuation multiples have clearly demonstrated that the paradox in selecting statistical estimator for benchmark multiple. In general, median and the harmonic mean are widely accepted statistical estimators to calculate the benchmark multiple. The arithmetic mean is ruled out because it tends to overestimate benchmark multiple when the multiple distributions are asymmetric (Hermann & Richter 2003).

To date, harmonic means is one of commonly used statistical estimators to calculate the benchmark multiple of comparable firms. Prior studies have shown that using harmonic mean to estimate benchmark multiple produces best valuation performance for multiples (Baker & Ruback, 1999; Liu *et al.*, 2001). One similarity in the prior studies is that the outlier of multiples is mitigated prior to the analysis. Following the previous studies, Minjina

(2009) removed the extreme multiples' values which are less than 1 percentile and greater than 99 percentiles of the multiple distributions prior to valuation multiples. However, the exclusion of the extreme multiples signifies the newly improved data may cause biased selection and pose a threat to reliability of the result. Indeed, Hermann and Richter (2003) found that harmonic mean is the worst statistical estimator for benchmark multiple when outlier effect is not eliminated, while in contrast, the median is found to be the most accurate statistical estimator in heterogeneous samples.

In addition, we believe that the harmonic mean may be a superior statistical estimator by chance when the outliers of multiple distributions are not mitigated. The rationale is that the statistical estimator may produce best valuation accuracy based on the shape of sample distribution. Imagine that if the sample distribution is skewed to the left; hence, "mean < median < mode". This implies that "harmonic mean \leq mean < median < mode" since the harmonic mean cannot be larger than the arithmetic mean. In contrast, if the distribution is skewed to the right; hence, "mean > median > mode". Arguably, it denotes that "mean > median > mode" and "mean \geq harmonic mean". In this scenario, median and the harmonic mean are closer to each other in the distribution, which is skewed to the right. Therefore, harmonic mean and median will perform very close to each other in valuation multiples. Furthermore, it is perfectly possible that valuation errors distribution may affect the effectiveness of harmonic mean as a

statistical estimator for benchmark multiple. For example, Liu *et al.* (2001) found that using harmonic mean to estimate benchmark multiples produce smaller valuation errors compared to those using arithmetic mean and median. However, they explained that valuation errors in their study are skewed to the left; thereby the arithmetic mean is smaller than the median. This denotes that the harmonic means is probably a better statistical estimator for benchmark multiple in left-skewed valuation errors distribution.

The above discussion shows that harmonic mean is likely to be a better statistical estimator for benchmark multiple when the following conditions are fulfilled: (i) distribution of valuation errors is left-skewed; and (ii) the outlier of multiple distributions is mitigated. Notably, prior studies have also favored the median as the statistical estimator for benchmark multiple (e.g., Alford, 1992; Cheng & McNamara, 2000; Lie & Lie, 2002; Park & Lee, 2003; Schreiner & Spremann, 2007). Alford (1992) argued that using the median as a statistical estimator can mitigate outlier effect that ascribe to extreme multiples. The study by Lie and Lie (2002) also supports the argument, i.e., using medians as statistical estimator for benchmark multiple does not produce biased estimation while arithmetic means is sensitive to the extreme outlier. Given the fact that prior studies provide inconclusive evidence in the selection of reliable statistical estimator for benchmark multiple (Baker & Ruback, 1999; Liu *et al.*, 2001; Hermann & Richter, 2003), the median is chosen as the statistical estimator

for benchmark multiple because we do not intend to eliminate any of the outlier in the samples.

Performance Measure for Multiples

Multiple is defined as a ratio of a market price variable to its value driver (Schreiner & Spremann, 2007). The underlying concept of value driver (i.e., the denominator) for a multiple is interpreted as a determinant of equity price (i.e., the numerator). In this context, we could expect value drivers to affect the market price differently and thus to be reflected in valuation accuracy of the multiples. As such, we can rank the valuation performance of multiples based on valuation errors, and the results can be used as a guideline in selecting the best performed multiple in corporate valuation. For example, if the valuation accuracy of price-to-earnings were found to be smaller than the one of price-to-sales, we can infer that earnings are a more significant value driver and vice versa.

In corporate valuation, prior studies have reached a consensus to estimate the predicted stock price using benchmark multiple based on theoretical concepts of multiples (e.g., Alford, 1992; Cheng & McNamara, 2000; Liu *et al.*, 2001; Lie & Lie, 2002; Schreiner & Spremann, 2007; Mînjina, 2009). That is, the predicted stock price is a product of a value driver of a firm (i.e., the denominator of multiple) and benchmark multiple as shown in equation [1]. This approach, which requires fewer assumptions, is more appropriate compared to other approaches, particularly regression

that is sensitive to violation of assumptions in estimation (Alford, 1992).

$$\Pi_{i,t} = D_{i,t} * M_{i,t} \quad [1]$$

Predicted stock (or firm) price and denominator of multiple are represented by $\Pi_{i,t}$ and $D_{i,t}$ at year (or period) “t”. The benchmark multiple for firm “i” is indicated $M_{i,t}$. As a linear relationship is likely invalid between actual- and predicted price, valuation errors will exist as shown in equation (2), as proposed by Liu *et al.* (2001) and Schreiner and Spremann (2007). The $\varepsilon_{i,t}$ represents the valuation errors of firm ‘i’ at year (or period) ‘t’ and $\pi_{i,t}$ is the actual price.

$$\pi_{i,t} = \Pi_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad [2]$$

In order to estimate the relative performance of multiples, the valuation errors are required to be scaled with stock price to control the size effects (Cheng & McNamara, 2000). The purpose of scaling is to standardize valuation errors and thus can be compared in percentage terms rather than magnitude. Unfortunately, there is no consensus in literature to select the scaling factor. On the one hand, Míñjina (2009), Schreiner and Spremann (2007) and Liu *et al.* (2001) chose the actual price as the scaling factor since it is consistent with prior research by Alford (1992). On the other hand, Park and Lee (2003) and Cheng and McNamara (2000) adopted predicted price as the scale factor as it renders consistency in valuation errors. To illustrate this, assume

that the under-predicted price and over-predicted price have equivalent distance from benchmark price, scaling of non-benchmark price (i.e., actual price) will make scaled absolute valuation error to differ in magnitude. In contrast, scaling by the predicted prices will eliminate this problem. Thus, the predicted price is adopted as a scaling factor in this study. As we are only interested in the magnitude of valuation errors, the scaled valuation errors are transformed into the equation [3].

$$|\varepsilon_{i,t} / \Pi_{i,t}| = [(\pi_{i,t} - \Pi_{i,t}) / \Pi_{i,t}] \quad [3]$$

Lastly, we need to select the statistical estimator of valuation errors to identify which multiple is more superior in terms of valuation performance (Hermann & Richter, 2003). The median is used in this study as it is a more robust statistical estimator for highly skewed data, whilst being less sensitive to extreme outliers (Norman & Streiner, 2007). In other words, the performance measure of multiples is based on median absolute error (MeAE) whereby lower MeAE implies higher valuation accuracy for multiples.

To assess the reliability of performance measure, the Wilcoxon Rank Sum test is used to distinguish the relative performance of multiples. Wilcoxon rank sum test is a non-parametric test that does not require normally distributed data. The null hypothesis in the Wilcoxon rank sum test assumes that two independent samples have the same shape of data distribution (Russo, 2003). The purpose of the null hypothesis is

to identify if two comparable groups have the same central tendencies (i.e., the median used in this study). If the null hypothesis is not true, it signifies two comparable groups have different medians. Then, the Wilcoxon rank sum test statistic can be used to identify which group of data is systematically larger (or statistically superior) than the other group (Moore & McCabe, 2005).

DATASET

In this study, the “Plantation Index” in Bursa Malaysia is used as the basis for identifying agribusiness firms. There are 41 firms listed in the Plantation Index. The dataset consists of the multiples for firms over seven annual periods from 2003 to 2009. In order to construct the multiples, the market equity price and financial data are required. The equity price is collected from Bursa Station database, whereas the financial and outstanding shares data are obtained from the annual reports. After excluding the missing data, there are 260 firm-year observations in this dataset.

The multiples are calculated according to the following steps. First, we need to estimate the value of equity (or the numerator) of multiples, i.e., market capitalization. The market capitalization is a product of the outstanding shares and share price. The data about outstanding shares of firms are extracted from the annual reports. The equity price is taken from the closing price of the last trading day in the month of the financial calendar. Thus, we can match the equity price and number of shares at the particular point of the time precisely

and it is not affected by stock split. Second, we need to estimate the value drivers (or the denominator) of multiples. The value drivers such as total revenue, earnings, book value of equity and asset are obtained from financial statements in annual reports. Specifically, we calculate the proxy of cash flow as the summation of net income, depreciation and amortization in financial statements (Park & Lee, 2003). Finally, we removed negative price-to-earnings and price-to-cash flow multiples since they are meaningless and cannot be interpreted.

Damodaran (2006) suggested that ‘Descriptive Tests’ such as average, median, standard deviation, standard error, minimum and maximum are necessary in valuation multiples to understand the characteristics of multiple distributions prior to analysis. Nonetheless, we believe that it is more appropriate to present the dataset with the inter-quartile range. The rationale for this is that investment analysts are generally more interested in middle concentration of distributions that are less affected by outliers. Additionally, the standard deviation and standard error are generally useful provided that the sample data are normally distributed. Such normally distributed data, however, are rarely exist in real valuation context. Table 1 shows the means, median and inter-quartile of multiples and return on equity (ROE) for multiple dataset. All multiple distributions are skewed to the right since the mean is greater than the median. The distribution of ROE was also skewed to the right in 2003, but the distributions of ROE were skewed

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Multiples and ROE

Multiple	Descriptive Statistics	Year						
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
P/E	Mean	12.48	11.76	14.21	17.69	20.94	6.73	17.98
	Median	10.54	9.62	11.00	13.53	10.82	6.03	10.98
	IQR	7.48	6.83	8.72	7.12	3.66	3.98	5.25
Number of samples		30	30	28	33	38	37	35
P/B	Mean	0.83	0.82	0.74	1.06	1.55	1.15	1.23
	Median	0.67	0.71	0.68	0.77	1.24	0.73	0.90
	IQR	0.65	0.47	0.51	0.60	0.82	0.67	0.69
Number of samples		34	34	33	37	40	40	41
P/CF	Mean	11.88	9.05	12.06	12.23	13.35	8.63	31.39
	Median	8.49	7.55	8.63	10.65	8.88	5.61	8.94
	IQR	8.12	6.67	5.03	6.68	3.70	3.19	7.45
Number of samples		31	31	29	35	39	38	37
P/S	Mean	9.13	9.98	8.06	3.95	4.69	2.60	4.43
	Median	2.18	1.72	1.70	2.49	3.23	1.31	2.38
	IQR	3.31	3.39	3.83	3.01	3.07	2.36	3.98
Number of samples		35	35	34	37	39	39	40
P/TA	Mean	0.64	0.63	0.57	0.71	1.08	0.78	0.85
	Median	0.47	0.51	0.47	0.62	0.91	0.58	0.62
	IQR	0.57	0.42	0.50	0.52	0.75	0.50	0.65
Number of samples		34	34	33	37	40	40	41
ROE	Mean	7.11%	7.34%	4.40%	0.80%	6.77%	5.66%	7.62%
	Median	6.53%	7.59%	5.35%	5.12%	13.29%	12.10%	7.93%
	IQR	6.27%	5.76%	5.76%	7.02%	9.16%	11.16%	5.06%
No. of samples		34	34	33	37	40	40	41

to the left from 2004 to 2009. In total, there are to 1,506 observations for 5 multiples and ROE.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the valuation errors of multiples were measured with median absolute error (MeAE). Wilcoxon rank sum is used to test the statistical difference between paired samples shown in Tables 2 and 3. If the

negative (positive) Wilcoxon value is less than -1.96 (greater than +1.96) and the p-value < 0.05, the paired distribution of valuation errors is statistically different at the 5% significance level since the null hypothesis is rejected. Then, the negative (positive) Wilcoxon value indicates that the valuation errors based on the method in row (column) is systematically larger (less) than the one in column (row). For instance, Table 2 demonstrates that the Wilcoxon

Table 2

Multiples valuation accuracy when benchmark multiple is estimated from plantation firms

	P/E	P/B	P/CF	P/S	P/TA
Performance Measure					
Mean Absolute Error (MAE)	0.66	0.60	0.72	2.76	0.60
Median Absolute Error (MeAE)	0.31	0.38	0.36	0.62	0.44
1st Quartile	0.11	0.22	0.15	0.30	0.21
3rd Quartile	0.59	0.62	0.58	1.20	0.71
Inter-Quartile Range	0.48	0.39	0.43	0.90	0.50
Wilcoxon value (p-value)					
P/B	-2.60 (0.01***)				
P/CF	-1.28 (0.20)	1.23 (0.22)			
P/S	-7.47 (0.00***)	-5.86 (0.00***)	-6.46 (0.00***)		
P/TA	-3.47 (0.00***)	-1.19 (0.23)	-2.16 (0.03**)	4.73 (0.00***)	

Notes: P/E = Price-to-Earnings, P/B = Price-to-Book Value, P/CF = Price-to-Cash Flow, P/S = Price-to-Sales. */**/** represent significant at 10%/ 5%/ 1% levels, respectively

and p-value for the paired distribution of valuation errors of P/S (in row) and P/E (in column) multiples is -7.47 (0.00). Since the negative Wilcoxon value is less than -1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, the valuation errors of paired multiples are statistically different at the 5% significance level. The negative Wilcoxon value denotes the valuation errors based on P/S multiple (in row) is systematically larger than P/E multiples (in column). Stated differently, the negative Wilcoxon value means the P/E multiples (in column) is statistically superior to P/S multiple (in row) in terms of valuation accuracy.

Table 2 shows that when the plantation sector is used as the basis to select comparable firms. The results show that the price-

to-earnings (P/E) multiple tends to yield the most accurate valuation performance. This occurrence is based on two criteria. First, the valuation error (MeAE) for P/E is the lowest in all multiples. Second, the Wilcoxon rank sum test result shows the valuation performance of price-to-earnings multiple is statistically different with all paired multiples with the exception to price-to-cash flow multiple. The negative Wilcoxon value indicates the valuation errors for P/E multiple (in column) is systematically smaller than all multiples in the row. In contrast, the price-to-sales multiple is the worst valuation method in terms of valuation errors (MeAE); and it is also statistically inferior to all multiples according to Wilcoxon rank sum test.

Table 3
Multiples valuation accuracy when benchmark multiple is derived from plantation firms and profitability (ROE)

	P/E	P/B	P/CF	P/S	P/TA
Performance Measure					
Mean Absolute Error (MAE)	0.64	0.62	0.81	1.51	0.63
Median Absolute Error (MeAE)	0.30	0.30	0.33	0.57	0.34
1st Quartile	0.10	0.10	0.12	0.30	0.12
3rd Quartile	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.90	0.63
Inter-Quartile Range (IQR)	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.61	0.50
Wilcoxon value (p-value)					
P/B	-0.21 (0.83)				
P/CF	-0.60 (0.55)	-0.39 (0.70)			
P/S	-6.70 (0.00***)	-6.88 (0.00***)	-6.47 (0.00***)		
P/TA	-1.66 (0.10*)	-1.43 (0.15)	-1.04 (0.30)	5.31 (0.00***)	

Notes: P/E = Price-to-Earnings, P/B = Price-to-Book Value, P/CF = Price-to-Cash Flow, P/S = Price-to-Sales. */**/*** represent significant at 10%/ 5%/ 1% levels, respectively.

When the ROE and industry membership are used to select the benchmark multiple, the price-to-earnings (P/E) and price-to-book value (P/B) multiples yield best valuation performance in terms of valuation errors (MeAE) followed by price-to-cash flow (P/CF), price-to-assets (P/TA) and price-to-sales (P/S) multiples (refer Table 3).

The Wilcoxon rank sum test demonstrates that the P/E valuation method is statistically indistinguishable to all paired multiples except for P/S multiple. Interestingly, the valuation performance of the P/S multiple is the worst in terms of valuation errors (MeAE), and it systematically produces bigger valuation errors than all paired multiples according to Wilcoxon rank sum test. Finally, the valuation errors (MeAE)

of all multiples are found to be improved after ROE is used as the control factor to select benchmark multiple. For example, the valuation error for P/B multiple was mitigated from 0.38 to 0.30. Interestingly, the results show that there is only one marginal improvement on the valuation performance of P/E multiple.

Overall, the current study indicates that P/TA and P/S are the most unreliable multiples in terms of valuation errors in both definitions of benchmark multiple as shown in Tables 2 and 3. Theoretically speaking, the P/S and P/TA multiples share a common trait, i.e., the economic means of a numerator is not matched by the denominator. This can be seen by the fact that the numerator of multiples, i.e.,

equity price, represents the economic value of the stock that held by equity investors. By contrast, the denominator of multiples, i.e., sales and assets, are economic variables for both equity investors and creditors. To illustrate this, the firm's total assets consist of total debts that are owned by creditors. Another example is that the firm has to use profit from sales to cover repayment of principal and interest on total debts that claimed by creditors. Thus, P/S and P/TA multiples clearly violate the consistency in the economic means and this phenomenon may cause mis-pricing (Damodaran, 2006).

Our empirical results are largely consistent with prior studies that investigated multiples in corporate valuation. First, our result shows that P/E multiple yields the smallest median absolute error in the plantation sector. Similarly, Schreiner and Spremann (2007) found that P/E multiple produces the smallest valuation errors compared to other multiples such as P/B, P/CF, P/S and P/TA for European firms. Consistent with Cheng's and McNamara's (2000) finding, this study revealed that the P/E multiple yields higher valuation accuracy compared to P/B. Furthermore, the current results also indicate that P/S multiple is the least accurate compared to P/E, P/B, P/CF and P/TA multiples. The concordance of the results was also uncovered in a study on the Bucharest Stock Exchange in Romania (Mînjina 2009). This denotes that P/S multiple is the least reliable multiple although it is difficult to be manipulated from the accounting perspective.

Finally, Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate that

the median absolute error (MeAE) and mean absolute error (MAE) differ significantly in terms of magnitude. We also can observe that most of the MAEs are located closely to first or third quarter of the valuation error distributions. Thus, we can infer that using MAE to identify relative performance of multiples is very sensitive to outliers and could lead to biased estimations. This result confirms our previous suggestion that using the average mean as a statistical estimator for valuation errors is not appropriate in valuation multiples.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article is to formulate methodologies of valuation multiples in agribusiness firms. Our article offers four important findings for analysts in pricing agribusiness (or traditional) firms with multiples: first, the median is a reliable and robust statistical estimator to estimate benchmark multiple and valuation performance; second, using ROE as a control factor on industry membership to estimate benchmark multiple leads to better valuation performance; third, the P/S multiple should be avoided in valuation context; and, the P/E multiple assures top valuation performance when pricing agribusiness (or traditional) firms.

Furthermore, market-based valuation multiples in this study indicate that earnings is the prime value driver in traditional industry because P/E multiple produces best valuation performance. Since stock price is a leading indicator for economic activities (Auret & Golding, 2012), we

suggest that the stock market perceives the asset utilization to be the core competencies of traditional firms in all economic cycles. Thus, analysts should view the efficiency of asset utilization as important criteria in pricing traditional firms.

Our study contributes to research on the use of valuation multiples. We have demonstrated how multiples can be used in the valuation of equities in agribusiness (or traditional) industry. Thus, our findings will help practitioners to use multiples more effectively. Our work can also serve as the benchmark in the formulation of future research on the effectiveness of this method of valuation.

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EFL Learners' Selective Listening Ability: Cocktail Party Effect

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated a group of EFL learners' selective listening ability. The cocktail party effect is the ability to focus on a particular auditory stimulus while filtering out other interfering stimuli. The premise is that selective attention is a capability that humans possess and utilize in their first language, which they may also be able to take advantage of in their second language. Thirty-six Iranian female EFL learners participated in the study. A listening comprehension test, developed to examine the selective listening ability, was administered to the participants. Their overall test performance revealed that they could successfully make use of their selective listening ability in their second language, English. However, statistical analysis showed that their performance significantly varied across the six subsets of the test; each of which was to examine a different aspect of cocktail party effect.

Keywords: Selective listening, cocktail party effect, EFL students, listening comprehension.

INTRODUCTION

The cocktail party effect refers to the listeners' ability to voluntarily pay attention to one channel of discourse and selectively ignore the rest in an environment with a plethora of competing speech signals (Clark & Clark, 1977; Stifelman, 1994). This is the ability that humans inherently possess and utilise so that people may attend to a particular message in a noisy environment like a family get-together when they wish to follow an interesting conversation among the cacophony of others. According to Clark and Clark (1977), this phenomenon poses a serious challenge to the theories of speech perception and implies that perception of continuous speech is a more complex process than the mere parsing and synthesizing of individual sound

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segments. Indeed, the listener cannot help receiving all the acoustic signals prevalent in the environment. However, it is the processing capability of the brain that may attend to a particular stream of signals and reject the other competing ones.

Selective listening requires the segregation and analysis of auditory input comprising multiple channels of speech and non-speech signals. The segregated signals need to be attributed to their correct sources in order to be made intelligible (see Bregman, 1990; Bregman & Ahad, 1996; Bregman, 2004; Kapralos, Jenkin, & Milios, 2003). This process is called auditory scene analysis proposed by Bregman (1990), who suggests that raw acoustic inputs should be parsed to make meaningful representations of every auditory source. Research has shown that several factors including the frequency of sound signals, spatial separation, pitch differences and degree of synchrony affect the segregation of different sources of speech signals into separate auditory streams, which consequently enhance selective listening ability (e.g., Bee & Micheyl, 2008; Brokx & Nooteboom, 1982; Nityananda & Bee, 2011; Stifelman, 1994; Webster & Thompson, 1954).

The idea of the cocktail party effect was raised in the 1950s, mostly due to the difficulties that air traffic controllers experienced in attending to several pilots whose competing voices were delivered via the same loudspeaker to them (Arons, 1992). In 1953, Cherry conducted a series of studies to investigate the diverse aspects of human selective listening ability. Early research on selective listening focused on

the listeners' ability in attending to a main channel of auditory input from among the multiple present messages and shadowing the intended message. The participants were instructed to follow a single body of auditory input and repeat the main message out loud (Cherry & Taylor, 1954; Treisman, 1964). Cherry and Taylor (1954) explored the variations in selective attention in terms of diotic or dichotic presentation of speech signals. In the dichotic test, the subjects listened to two unmixed speech signals delivered to the opposite ears. They had to shadow one and ignore the other. They were also asked to report as much of the rejected ear message as they remembered. They found that dichotic presentation of simultaneous messages makes attending to the rejected message more difficult.

Selective attention may be affected by the number of interfering channels (Webster & Solomon, 1955; Yost, 1994, as cited in Stifelman, 1994). Treisman (1964) studied the effect of the number of interfering speech signals on selective attention. He reported that when one interfering channel accompanied the main message, the participants' shadowing performance was not significantly affected. However, the presentation of two interfering speech signals negatively influenced the shadowing of the main message.

Treisman (1964, as cited in Clark, 1977, p. 218) presents a hierarchy of difficulties posed by the interfering messages which affect the shadowing of the main message. The hierarchy follows an ascending order, from the least to the most interfering:

1. A different voice to the opposite ear
2. The same voice to the opposite ear but in a different language
3. The same voice to the opposite ear but in a second language also known to the listener
4. The same voice to the same ear

Maccoby and Konrad (1996) examined the relationship between age and selective listening ability. They studied three groups of children; kindergarten children, 2nd and 4th graders. The children were exposed to the simultaneous delivery of two speech signals and asked to report one intended message and ignore the other. They found that older subjects performed significantly better in reporting the target message, which may be attributed to the high cognitive demands and the complexity of perceptual processing posed by selective listening tasks. Stifelman (1994) studied silent listening comprehension rather than shadowing to investigate the participants' selective listening ability. The participants listened to multiple simultaneous auditory messages and followed one main channel for comprehension while they were to identify some target words in the interfering messages. She reported that as the number of interfering messages increased, the participants' performance significantly decreased in terms of both listening comprehension of the main message and the identification of target words.

Interestingly, research has shown that not only humans but animals also enjoy selective attention capabilities (Wisniewski

& Hulse, 1997). Nityananda and Bee (2011) investigated the cocktail party phenomenon in grey frogs. They reported that, like humans, grey frogs may use frequency separation of simultaneous vocalizations to distinguish different sources of signals. They concluded that "the ability of the frogs to segregate concurrent voices based on frequency separation may involve ancient hearing mechanisms for source segregation shared with humans and other vertebrates."

The voluminous literature on cocktail party effect has mostly centered on the selective attention in the first language. From the earliest studies in the 1950s so far, researchers have been concerned with the investigation of diverse aspects of selective attention and the underlying perceptual processes involved in selective listening ability in the first language. However, the present study purports to investigate the selective listening ability of EFL learners in their second language. The study specifically aims at examining whether second language learners can demonstrate a selective listening ability in the second language they are learning, i.e. English. Accordingly, the following research questions were posed:

1. Will the participants' listening comprehension be significantly affected if the main and interfering messages are presented by the same speaker?
2. Will the participants' listening comprehension be significantly affected if the main and interfering messages are presented by different speakers of the opposite sex?

3. Does white noise as the background interface significantly affect the participants' comprehension of the main foreground message?
4. Does music as the background interface significantly affect the participants' comprehension of the main foreground message?

Based on the above research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. The participants' listening comprehension will not be significantly affected if both the main and interfering messages are spoken by the same speaker.
2. The participants' listening comprehension will not be significantly affected if the main and interfering messages are spoken by two different speakers of the opposite sex.
3. The participants' listening comprehension will not be significantly affected if white noise is included as the background interface.
4. The participants' listening comprehension will not be significantly affected if music is included as the background interface.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The participants of the study were 36 intermediate EFL learners who were studying English in Kimia language institute in Shiraz, Iran in the summer

term. The participants' proficiency level was ascertained through the institute's standardized placement test. The subjects came from two intact classrooms taught by two female teachers. They ranged in age from 12 to 15 years old. The results of the proficiency test revealed that both classes were homogenous.

Design and Instrument

The research took on the design of a case study. To assess the EFL learners' selective listening ability, the researcher developed a listening test using the latest version of an audio processing and edit software, Wavosaur. In this regard, a number of listening tasks were selected first. The audio files were uploaded into the software to be adjusted for intensity and quality. Then another file, which was intended as the interfering message, was overlaid and the output file was saved to be used in the listening test. The test comprised 6 subsets labeled part 1-6 on the test sheet. Every subset involved an audio file to which the students listened first and a set of corresponding 6 multiple-choice comprehension items on the test paper which they answered based on their comprehension of the main message. The subsets were designed to address different research questions. All the audio texts were spoken by the same male and female speakers. The average speech delivery rate on all the listening items was 144 Words per Minute (WPM). All audio files were recorded at a sampling rate of 44100 HZ, 16 Bit, stereo. All foreground (main) messages

were spoken at an intensity of 250 dB. Overall, the students answered 36 items on the test sheet, 6 for each listening item. The 6 subsets were designed as follows:

Part 1. The audio file consisted of 64 seconds listening text. The foreground message, to which the participants were to attend, was spoken by a male voice. This particular intensity was used since it was proved convenient through trial and error. Besides, the audio files were played to a few pilot subjects to judge the suitability and quality of the sound. Moreover, the loudness and volume of the audio was adjusted during the test to be convenient for the participants. The interfering message, spoken by the same voice, began 10 seconds after the main message was started in order to allow the participants to identify the main channel to follow. The background voice was set at an intensity of 50 dB. Like other subsets, both messages ended simultaneously.

Part 2. The audio file consisted of a 72 second listening text. The foreground message was spoken by the male voice. The background, irrelevant message, spoken by the female voice at an intensity of 50 dB, began 10 seconds after the main message.

Part 3. The audio file consisted of a 64 second listening text. The foreground message was spoken by the female voice. The background message, spoken

by the same female voice, was set at an intensity of 50 dB. The background message began 10 seconds after the main message but ended synchronous to it.

Part 4. The audio file comprised a 67 second listening text. The foreground message was spoken by the female voice. The background message, beginning with a 10-second delay, was spoken by the male voice at an intensity of 50 dB.

Part 5. The audio file was a 64 second listening text. The foreground message was spoken by the male voice. As to the background audio channel, white noise at an intensity of 250 dB was used. White noise was used as the background channel since the researcher aimed to use different auditory qualities as the background channel and examine the participants' performance at the presence of different auditory conditions. The interfering white noise began 10 seconds after the main message but ended synchronously.

Part 6. The audio file consisted of a 79 second listening text. The foreground message was spoken by the female voice. The background channel was a song accompanied by orchestral music at an intensity of 50 dB. The song was sung by a male voice in Italian, a language unknown to the participants. The music began 10 seconds after the main message but ended simultaneously.

Procedure

Before the administration of the test, the researcher took time and explained the major objectives of the study to the participants. The participants were provided with non-technical definitions of selective listening ability and cocktail party effect. Then they were given sample listening practices similar to the listening items on the test both to get familiar with the acoustic qualities of the male and female voices and to practice following the main channel message. Afterwards, the participants were given the test and asked to put on their headphones. The listening items were delivered binaurally over stereo Somic® headphones DT-2117. Having listened to every item, the students were given time to answer the 6 corresponding test items on the test sheet based on their comprehension of the main message. The same procedure was followed for all the 6 subsets until the students completed the test in 15 minutes. The reliability of the test was estimated via split-half method using Spearman r formula, which, after the correction of the coefficient for the whole test, yielded an index of $r=0.60$. As to the scoring procedure, every correct response was allocated 1 point, and every incorrect answer received zero.

RESULTS

The present study was conducted to specifically answer the question whether EFL learners can demonstrate selective listening ability in their second language, English. The idea was then translated into four research questions as delineated above.

The students' overall test performance resulted in a mean score of 21.75 out of 36 total and the standard deviation of 3.67. All the scores fell within one SD above or below the mean. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run to examine the normality of the data, which showed that the data were normally distributed. The participants' mean scores on the test was thus above 50% of the test scores.

Concerning the participants' performance on the 6 subsets of the test, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the raw data and to examine the statistical significance of the differences of the means. Table 1 illustrates the mean scores and standard deviations of the students' performance on each subset.

As shown in Table 1, students' performance on two pairs of subsets, namely, subsets 1 and 3 and subsets 2 and 4, yielded the same mean scores of 3.83 and 2.91, respectively. In subsets 1 and 3 ($M=3.83$), both the main and interfering messages were spoken by the same speaker, either male or female. In subsets 2 and 4 ($M=2.91$), the main and interfering messages were spoken by different speakers of the opposite sex, either male or female. Students performance yielded the greatest mean score in subset 5 ($M=4.75$) where white noise was used as the background interface. The students' mean score in subset 6 ($M=3.5$) was very close to the means in subsets 1 and 3.

In order to test the research hypotheses and examine the statistical significance of the differences of means, multivariate t test

Table 1

The mean and standard deviation of the students' scores on each subset

Subsets	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5	Part 6
Mean	3.83	2.91	3.83	2.91	4.75	3.5
SD	1.11	0.66	0.71	1.95	1.13	1.16

Table 2

Multivariate one-sample T^2 test results for subsets 1, 2 and 5

2-tailed t-Test								
Variable	Ho. Mean	Act. Mean	SE Mean	T^2	DF for T^2	F	DF for F	P for F
3	3.000	3.909	0.343	26.849	3, 10	7.160	3, 8	0.012
3	3.000	2.909	0.211					
6	3.000	4.636	0.338					

Table 3

Multivariate one-sample T^2 test results for subsets 1, 2 and 6

2-tailed t-Test								
Variable	Ho. Mean	Act. Mean	SE Mean	T^2	DF for T^2	F	DF for F	P for F
2	3.000	3.636	0.338	10.560	3, 10	2.816	3, 8	0.107
3	3.000	3.909	0.343					
3	3.000	2.909	0.211					

(Hotellings T-square statistic) was used. All calculations were run using StatistiXL software package. Table 2 illustrates the T^2 value for the mean difference among the subsets 1, 2 and 5.

As shown in Table 2, the p value of 0.012 is much smaller than 0.05. This indicates that the differences between the means are statistically significant. In other words, the students have performed significantly better on the subsets 1 and 5. Accordingly, the first, second and third null hypotheses are rejected. Table 3 shows the T^2 value for the mean difference among subsets 1, 2 and 6.

As shown in Table 3, the p value (0.107) is bigger than 0.05. This indicates that

the difference between the means is not statistically significant. Accordingly, the fourth null hypothesis is accepted. That is, the participants' listening comprehension was not significantly affected when music was added as the background interface.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Literature on cocktail party phenomenon almost lacks empirical evidence on EFL learners' selective listening ability. The present study aimed at investigating the EFL learners' selective listening ability and their comprehension of a foreground message at the interface of different background auditory inputs.

The results regarding the participants' overall test performance indicated that intermediate EFL learners had an above average selective listening ability in their second language (i.e. their mean score was larger than 50% of the total test score). However, their performance on the subsets of the test varied significantly with regard to variations in the background channel interface. The students had their lowest performance on the subsets 2 and 4 where the foreground and background messages were presented by two different speakers of the opposite sex. This is inconsistent with the findings of Treisman (1964) who reported that the gender differences in voice may enhance selective attention in the first language. In addition, according to Stifelman (1994), pitch difference between the interfering messages is one of the factors that boost selective attention. On the other hand, despite the previous reports in the literature, the present findings showed that the participants' comprehension of the foreground message significantly improved when either message was presented by the same voice, either male or female. In this regard, Multivariate t test (Hotellings T-square statistic) showed that the students' performance significantly improved on the subsets 1 and 3 where both the foreground and background messages were presented by the same male and the same female voices, respectively. In these subsets, the acoustic qualities of the foreground and background voices were similar except for the sound intensity.

The participants had their best

performance on the subset 5 where white noise was added as the background interface. Multivariate t test showed that this difference is statistically significant. This may be attributed to the processing capabilities of the brain in which non-linguistic stimuli are processed in the right hemisphere so that the competing noise presents the least interference to the language processing capacities (see Chastain, 1988; Yule, 1996).

With regard to the sixth subset, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in the students' performance comparing with subsets 1 and 2. Though the background song in the 6th subset was in a language unknown to the participants, it still posed the same level of interference as the background message in the subset 1.

Overall, the study demonstrated that Iranian intermediate EFL learners' were able to listen selectively in English in a variety of listening environments. Still, the participants' performance on different subsets of the test varied significantly. Although the students had never experienced authentic contexts where a mob of English speakers might speak simultaneously, they could utilize their selective listening ability in following a main channel of discourse on the test. This may account for the fact that selective attention is an inherent human and even non-human ability (see Nityananda & Bee, 2001), which might be transferred into the language learners' second language.

There seems to be a universe of vacancies to be filled by further research to investigate the various aspects of cocktail party effect in EFL learners. Further research

could also be called upon to compensate for the limitations of the present study. As to the limitations, the present study did not control for the variables of age, gender and affective factors. Moreover, the study did not control for the semantic value though research has shown that meaning can affect listening comprehension (Bloomfield, Wayland, Rhoades, Blodgett, Linck, & Ross, 2010). Research has shown that there is a significant correlation between age and selective attention in the first language (Maccoby & Konrad, 1996). All participants of the present study were female students at the intermediate level of proficiency. However, recent research suggests that gender factor must be taken into account in cocktail party studies. For example, Zundorf, Karnath, and Lewald (2011), in their study on gender differences in sound source localization, reported that male participants outperformed females in localization of specific sound sources from among multiple sound signals. Future studies may include participants of either sex across all levels of language proficiency while, at the same time, controlling for affective factors and using qualitative sources of data as well.

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Expressing Emotions in Words: *Facebook* Text-based Comments in Tamil

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ABSTRACT

Language being used as a communication tool is embedded with emotions. Emotions in language are obvious in face-to-face (F2F) communication than in any other forms of communications. Media Richness Theory explains that the richer the media is the more successful communication will be and vice versa (Moczyński, 2010). This means text-based communication such as letters, e-mails, memo and so forth lacking of non-verbal cues like intonations, facial expressions, body movements and others, will not be as successful as F2F communication. On the other hand, there are also studies which have proven that computer mediated communication can convey non-verbal cues as effective as in F2F communication by manipulating the fonts with capitalization or using coloured fonts to express emotions (Mali, 2007; Boonthanom, 2004). Nevertheless, how is it possible to communicate non-verbal informations in a language like Tamil which does not have capital letters or colour code? The aim of this study is to identify the techniques used by Tamils in conveying emotions through words in *facebook*. This paper further discusses the frequent and helpful techniques used in Tamil communication. Samples chosen for this study were forty active *facebook* users who have good language competency in Tamil.

Keywords: communicating techniques, emotions, *facebook*, non-verbal cues, text-based communication, Tamil, *Tholkaappiyam*, verbal cues

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INTRODUCTION

Being a social creature, communication is an extensive never ending event for mankind. Men communicate since birth till death even in sleep through dreams (Mokhtar Muhammad, 2008). Communication

is sending, receiving and transferring messages, ideas, opinions and feelings. We need a common shared tool such as language (verbal and non-verbal), signs and visual to convey the communicative meaning. Men intend to invent many mediums and medias to fulfil their desire to communicate. Language is the most powerful medium used by men to communicate (Jiménez-Ortega *et al.*, 2012). It may vary according to groups, yet the purpose and usage of any language is the same for all, which is to transfer one's thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Language being used as a communication tool is embedded with emotions. Emotions being distinguished in different categories also varies in numbers. Sarter (2012) explains that Darwin distinguishes eight basic emotions which were later extended and divided into subgroups and named as primary, secondary, and tertiary emotions. According to Sarter (2012), the more recent and established list of emotions by Parrot (2001), has six basic emotions and 133 subdivided emotions. Since this study focuses on emotions in Tamil language, it is proper to use the categorization of emotions by Tamil scholars.

In Tamil emotions are defined with the term **மெய்ப்பாட்டியல்** *meyppaattiyal* (physicalization of feelings) in **தொல்காப்பியம்** *Tholkaappiyam* (ancient epic). Muthukumarasami (2007) describes the meaning of *meyppaattiyal* as inner feeling evoked by external factors received through sensory organs and expressed through facial and body movements, or language which can be seen and felt by the

observer. *Tholkaappiyam* the earliest work of Tamil grammar has stated eight basic emotions which can be verbalised in 32 expressions (Ilampuranar, 2001). The 8 basic emotions as stated in *tholkaappiyam* are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Emotions in *Tholkaappiyam*

In Tamil	In English
நகை (nahai)	humour
அழுகை (azhuhai)	sorrow
இளிவரல் (ilivaral)	satire
மருட்கை (marutkai)	innocent confusion
அச்சம் (accam)	fear
பெருமிதம் (perumitham)	pride
வெகுளி (vehuli)	anger
உவகை (uvahai)	joy

Ilampuranar (2001) explains emotions are influenced by four factors namely objects, feeling, actuators and expressions. Out of these four, expressions are the only factor that can be seen and understood by others. The other three are internal factors that can not be seen with the naked eye. Muthukumarasami (2007), who agrees with Ilampuranar (2001), states that emotion is the way a person uses verbal and non-verbal

language to share the inner feelings received from nature. Language is the best tool to measure the relationship between inner feelings and expressions accurately and share them with others (Muthukumarasami, 2007).

Emotions in language are obvious in face to face (F2F) communication than in any other forms of communications. Media Richness Theory explains that the richer the media is the more successful communication will be and vice versa (Moczynski, 2010). This means that text-based communication such as letters, e-mails, memo and so forth which lack non-verbal cues like intonation, facial expressions, body movements and others, will not be as successful as F2F communication. On the other hand there are studies which have proven that computer mediated communication can convey non-verbal cues as effective as in F2F communication by manipulating the fonts by capitalizing or using coloured fonts to express emotions (Mali, 2007; Boonthanom 2004).

Review of Text-based On-line Communications

Almost every youngster today is equipped with a form of telecommunication tool and most of their communications involve exchange of written text alone (Bauerlein, 2011) such as giving and reading comments on social networking sites. Computer mediated communication using verbal cues and expression of emotions through written words lacks facial expression and non-verbal cues (Casale, Tella & Fioravanti,

2013). Even though online interactions lack non-verbal cues, it still satisfy interpersonal needs. It is observed that online interpersonal communications are effective as that of face-to-face interactions and opportunities (Flippin-Wynn & Tindall, 2011). The opportunities vary from financial, relational, social networking and business opportunities.

Subramani (2010) affirms that 65% of the social meaning of the messages conveyed are using non-verbal cues, especially the emotions are transferred more effectively through non-verbal communications. Textual substitutes and symbols are used in the virtual context to compensate the missing non-verbal features such as facial expression, pitch and intonation (Omar, Embi & Yunus 2012). Cvijikj and Michahelles (2011) investigated the sentiment in the content written in Swiss German dialect on a Facebook brand page and found that emotions are expressed through adjectives or via the internet slang elements such as intentional misspelling, emoticons and interjections.

A study conducted by Omar *et al.* (2012), has investigated communication strategy used in English language among a public university students in Malaysia. Findings of the study show that onomatopoeia (Woowww!; ZZZzzzz), substitution (before = b4; laugh out loud = lol), using emoticons (^_^, :), :P, =D), capitalizing words for stress (TRULY innocent....; THANKS a lot...) and punctuation (!!!, ???) are used as the paralinguistic strategies. Siti and Azianura (2012) examined the language features and

patterns of online communicative language used by young Malaysian *facebook* users. The respondents of their study were from three main ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian), with different cultural backgrounds, and different mother tongues but using English as medium of communication. Siti and Azianura (2012) found that the online users use spelling innovations and modifications, combinations of letter and number homophone, (before = b4; someone = sum1), reduction or omission of vowels (have = hv; please = pls), use one letter to represent a word (you = U; why = Y), acronyms and abbreviations (Oh my God = OMG; Thank you = TQ) and emoticons (:D, :P, :-P) as language features of online communication.

Aims of the Study

This study attempts to fill certain gaps in the literature. Most of the studies about computer mediated communications investigated the use of English language and its' non-verbal features. The researcher could not find any article investigating the use of Tamil language in online communication. The curious features of Tamil language which does not have capital letters or colour code in communicating non-verbal information initiated this study. Therefore this study tries to investigate the communicative strategies used by Tamil language speakers in *Facebook*. The objectives of this study are:

Objective 1: To identify the techniques used by speakers of Tamil in conveying emotions through words in *facebook*.

Objective 2: To discuss the most frequent and helpful communication techniques used in *facebook* comments in Tamil

Theoretical Framework

Lens model approach is one of the suitable approaches to investigate the techniques used to transfer emotions through word. The lens model was introduced by Egon Brunswik in 1952 to investigate problems regarding physical environment perception (Brunswik, 1956). Later it was developed and used extensively in analysing human judgment related to social perception (Boonthanom, 2004). According to Boonthanom (2004), the use of lens model expended to communication research including communication of emotions via non-verbal behaviours including facial expressions, body gestures, vocal communications, music performance and visual art. These studies examined communication using different emotion cues in different context.

The researcher has adopted Lens Model to investigate the techniques used in communicating emotions in social networking site *facebook* (see Fig.1).

METHODOLOGY

Purposive sampling method is used in this study with university students between the ages of 20 to 23 years as the target group. The samples were chosen from a university situated in the central region of Peninsular Malaysia that offers Language and Linguistic studies with a Tamil Major. Forty students who are active *facebook* users with good language competency in Tamil

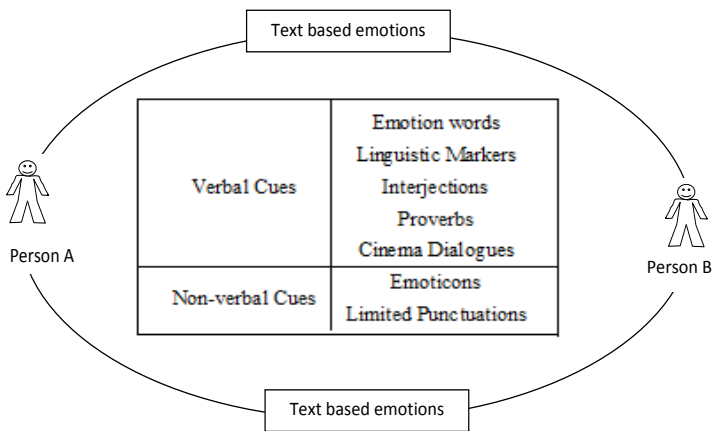


Fig.1: Text-based emotion cues in Tamil

were involved in this study. Among them, *facebook* postings of 16 students were utilised to identify the communicating techniques frequency used to express emotions. The techniques were identified essentially from textual communication rather than visual or multimedia communications. After identifying the techniques, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to all 40 students and a survey was conducted to check among the users which technique was useful in their *facebook* communication. Two tables were created based on the frequency of usage of various techniques (Table 2) and the usefulness of these techniques (Table 3).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As stated earlier, the aim of this study is to identify the techniques used by Tamils in conveying emotions through words in *facebook*. Results showed the Tamil comments about wall-posts in *facebook* were made using two forms of writing. One using the Tamil script such as **நன்றி** (*nanRi*)

and the other using Romanized script such as “*nandri*” which means thanks. Moreover, five verbal and two non-verbal cues were found as the communicating technique used by Tamils to express emotions in *facebook* conversation. The verbal cues found are emotion words, linguistic markers, interjections, proverbs and cinema dialogues. Where as the non-verbal cues are emoticons, and punctuations.

Emotion Words

Emotion words are words that represent feelings such as happy, angry, sad, and so on which we could find in the dictionary (Boonthanom, 2004). Gendron (2012) explains that emotion words play an important role in understanding the meaning of expressed emotions. The results of this study show that Tamil speakers also use emotion words to express their emotions in text-based *facebook* communication.

These comments have emotion words such as *sad*, *angry*, *happy*, and *proud*, which were used by the writers to express their

Example 1:

Comments posted in facebook	English gloss
...மிகவும் வருத்தமாக இருக்கிறது. (... mihavum varuththamaaha irukkiRathu)	I feel very sad.
இச்செய்தியைப் படித்தவுடன் கோவம் வருகிறது... (iccheythiyaip padiththavudan koovam varuhiRathu).	I'm angry reading this news
மிகவும் சந்தோஷமாகவும் பெருமையாகவும் இருக்கிறது. (mihavum santhooshamaahavum perumaiyaahavum irukkiRathu)	Feeling very happy and proud

Example 2:

Comments posted in facebook	English gloss
எனக்குப் புரியவில்லை... விளக்கம் தாருங்கள் (enakkup puriyavillai... viLakkam thaarunggal.).	I don't understand... please explain.
வாழ்க்கையை விளையாட்டாகப் பார்த்தால் அதில் ஒரு சுவாரசியம் தெரியும். வாழ்வு இனித்திடும். (vaazhkaiyai viLaiyaattaaha paarththaal athil oru suvaarisayam theriyum. vaazhvu iniththidum.)	If you see life as a game. It'll be interesting. Life will be sweet.
இவர்களின் முயற்சி பாராட்டத் தக்கதாகும் (ivarhaLin muyaRchi paaraattath thakkathaahum)	We should appreciate their effort.

Example 3:

Comments posted in facebook	English gloss
... அதிக பிரசங்கி என்கின்றனர், ஐயோ!! ஐயோ!! (athiha pirasanggi enkinRanar).	Oh! Ouch! They say I preach a lot.
அந்தோ பரிதாபம்..... (anthoo parithaabam.....)	Alas, it's awful.
ஆஹா... என்ன அருமையான கண்டுபிடிப்பு. (aahaa enna arumaiyaana kaNdupidippu)	Wow! What a fantastic discovery

Example 4:

Comments posted in facebook	English gloss
பேராசை பெரு நஷ்டம்... (peeraasai peru nashtam...)	Greediness will cause great loss
நண்டு தன் பிள்ளைக்கு நடை கற்றுக் கொடுத்த கதை ஆயிற்று (naNdu than piLLaikku nadai kaRRuk koduththa kathai aayiRRu)	Like crab teaching its young to walk straight.
ஊருக்கு மட்டும் உபதேசம் (uuruukku mattum upattheesam)	Advice meant for others only

emotions. A native speaker will not use such words in F2F communication to elicit emotions. While it may sound unnatural and dramatic. Often that may sound a direct translation of English.

Linguistic Markers

In our daily conversations emotion words are seldom used to directly communicate feelings. Instead linguistic markers are used as substitute. Boonthanom (2004) defines linguistic markers as phrases with no emotion words, which could transfer emotion between message sender and receiver.

In the first extract, emotion conveyed is *marutkai* (innocent confusion), *uvahai* (joy) is the emotion of the second phrase and *perumitham* (pride) is the emotion underlying in the third phrase. There is no emotion words used in these phrases to directly communicate the feelings, yet the reader could understand the emotions expressed by the writer indirectly.

Interjections

Interjections are words or phrases used to express sudden emotions. There is a relationship between the speaking styles, for example the voice quality-related prosodic features such as intonations and the paralinguistic information carried by an interjection (Ishi *et al.*, 2012). Interjections are seldom used in formal conversation, i.e. Oh!, ouch!, alas!, and uh! are some of the interjections used in English. Where else ஐயோ (*aiyoo*), அந்தோ (*anthoo*), ஆஹா (*aaha*) are examples of Tamil interjections.

This is usually followed by an exclamation mark.

In Tamil, these interjections do not have context-free meaning on its own but they do convey meanings based on context. The interjection *aiyoo* could be used to express any emotion. The reader or receiver could only understand the meaning by relating it to a situation (as seen in the above example 3).

Proverbs

It is common for Tamil native speakers to use proverbs in their daily conversation. Globally, proverbs are used to express something symbolically. They are used to express feelings, to praise, to warn, to mourn and to indicate failure (Omoera, 2013). Proverbs are usually very old and used repeatedly. In this study, the receiver or reader could understand the senders' emotions through the proverbs used in the comments posted.

The first proverb is normally expressed with negative emotions such as anger, sadness, fear or shame. This helps the receiver to understand the emotion expressed by relating it with their knowledge about the proverb. The second and third proverbs are to criticize others about their wrong behaviour. This explains that proverbs help the participants of a conversation to understand the emotion and the purpose of a proverb used.

Cinema Dialogues

The influence of Tamil cinemas is undeniable in the Tamil society regardless of age. It is very normal to hear famous movie dialogues

Example 5:

Comments posted in <i>facebook</i>	English gloss
Nee avlo nallava naada. (nii avLo nallava naadaa)	Are you so good?
Na Nalla Panreno Ilayo... Nee Nallave Panra Da!!!! (naa nallaa paNNureenoo illayoo... nii nallaavee paNNura daa!!!!)	I may not act well but you are acting very well.
Aani ye pudunge vendam (aani yee pudungga veeNdaam)	Don't have to pull the nail.

in their daily conversations. There are also people who mimic the cinema dialogues especially humorous dialogues by famous comedians. This helps the participants of computer mediated communication to interpret the emotions conveyed by the writer or sender easily.

These examples are famous Tamil cinema dialogues of modern times. The first two phrases are said by actor Santhanam one of the famous comedians in Tamil movies. These phrases were uttered to tease and to show surprise. The third phrase in the example is a dialogue by the comedian Vadiveloo in the film titled "*Friends*". This dialogue was uttered in anger to stop someone from teasing the other continuously. The listeners or readers will get the clue that they have crossed the limit.

All the five techniques stated here are used to convey the emotional message through verbal cues that use alphabets. These techniques help the *facebook* communicative participants to convey and to understand the emotions expressed as effective as F2F communications. Among these five techniques the usage of cinema dialogues are not often quoted in other languages (Das & Bandyopadhyay, 2013; Siti & Azianura,

2012; Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2011; Omar et. al., 2011; Boonthanom, 2004). Hence it seems like a unique technique used by the Tamil speakers. Any member of a Tamil community will find that cinema plays an important role in their life.

Emoticons

In brief, emoticons are icons used to express emotions. According to Halvorsen (2012), emoticons were designed to convey emotions in a direct and transparent manner. Wei (2012), states that the emoticons were used for the first time in 1967 in an article in *Reader's Digest*, and this would be the first version of emoticons. Presently, text-based emoticons have been converted into graphical emoticons, which are more expressive (Jibril & Abdullah, 2013). In this study, it was found that the usage of emoticons is very limited to only phrases using the Romanised Tamil script.

The first phrase may sound as a command without the emoticon. The emoticon used here is to inform that the intention of the writer is not to command but just a reminder. The emoticon used here actually turned the impolite statement into a subtle polite

Example 6:

Comments posted in <i>facebook</i>	English gloss
6.30kku srmbn le turun pandrom!! 😊 (6.30kku seremban le turun paNNuRoom)	We'll get down in Seremban at 6.30.
Dedicated 2 u machi... 😊	Dedicated to you brother in law
Athu yen enakkuu??? 😊 (athu een eankku???)	Why does it happen to me?

statement. On the other hand in the second phrase the emoticon added a special tone of teasing. If the phrase is read without this emoticon it may sound sentimental. So the writer has added an emoticon in order to avoid the sentimental feeling and made it humorous. Whereas the third example with a frowning faced emoticon shows that the writer is upset with what is happening to him. Although the usage of emoticons helps to interpret the intensity of an emotion, they are very rare and limited in Tamil *facebook* conversation.

Punctuations

Punctuations are symbols used to indicate a pause while reading a text. According to Carey (2013), punctuations are used to indicate how to speak a text. Punctuations are also considered as a writing system that conveys information by symbols other than alphabets and numbers (Cook, 2014). Symbols such as comma (,), exclamation (!), question mark (?), are often used once or more than once to emphasize emotional expression and considered as clues for identifying emotional presence in a sentence (Das & Bandyopadhyay, 2013). Lee and Wobbrock (2012) stated that usage of punctuation symbols became more

important with the increased use of text and instant messaging. This trend is observable among Tamil usage in *facebook*.

In this study which investigated text-based communication in *facebook*, the participants were found to have used the punctuations quite frequently. They tended to use them more than once at the end of a sentence. The most frequently used punctuation symbols are full stop (.), question mark (?), and exclamation mark (!). The usage of comma repeatedly is uncommon but yet was used by a respondent in this study. The uses of punctuations more than once emphasise emotions and permit the reader to contemplate.

The non-verbal cues, such as emoticons and punctuations were used as techniques to convey a message in a text-based communication among the Tamils in *facebook*. The usage of capital letter or manipulation of fonts as found in English text-based communications (Mali, 2007; Boonthanom, 2004) were not found in this study. This is because Tamil language does not have capital letters and for cyber Tamil users colour coding in textual expressions is still new. Additionally the meaning of colour varies among various cultures.

Example 7:

Comments posted in <i>facebook</i>	English gloss
வாழ்க்கை ஒரு குற்றமா??? நாம் யாவரும் குற்றவாளிகளா??? (vaazhkai oru kuRRamaa??? naam yaavarum kuRRavaaLihaLaa???)	Is life a crime? Are we criminals?
தோல்வி நரகம் என்றால் வெற்றி சொர்க்கம் தானே....!! (thoolvi naraham enRaal veRRi sorkkam thaanee....!!)	If failure is hell than success should be heaven!
அதிலும் கொடுமை என்னவென்றால்,,,,, மனிதன் மனிதனைப் பார்த்தே அஞ்சுகிறான்..... (athilum kodumai ennavenRaal,,,,, manithan manithanaip paarththee anjuhiRaan.....)	It is horrible that man fears man himself.

FREQUENT AND HELPFUL TECHNIQUES USED

The second aim of this study is to discuss the most frequent and helpful techniques used in Tamil communication. For this, 355 comments posted by 16 respondents for duration of three months were analysed. Only posts with Tamil words (either in Tamil script or Romanised scripts) were chosen. The comments in English and Malay languages were omitted. From the data analysed, it is found out that the participants used linguistic markers most frequently, followed by punctuations, emotion words, proverbs, cinema dialogues, interjections, and the emoticons. Frequencies of the techniques used are listed in Table 2.

This proves that the participants of *facebook* communication in Tamil use linguistic markers as frequently as in F2F communication. It is very realistic to use linguistic markers to express emotions (Boonthanom, 2004) than any other techniques. Punctuations are also used at high frequency. This is used to give space and time for the reader or receiver to think

Table 2
Communication techniques used in order of frequency

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Linguistic Markers	293	82.5
Punctuations	220	61.9
Emotion Words	55	15.5
Proverbs	16	4.5
Cinema Dialogues	10	2.8
Interjections	8	2.3
Emoticons	6	1.7

about the message sent. The emotion words were also used by the participants to convey the underlying emotions in their comments. Proverbs and cinema dialogues are commonly used in modern Tamil communication. This familiarity aids in quick perception of an intonation in textual context. In spite of this, these techniques were used less than 5% in Tamil comments in *facebook*. Even though interjections are used to express emotions, they are usually used in informal conversations and seldom used in written form. In this study interjections were found in only 8 comments. Emoticons which were invented

for text-based communication to express emotions were used very rarely by Tamil speakers. Out of 355 comments only 6 were found to have emoticons. These emoticons were also used only with the Romanised Tamil phrases.

To know how helpful these techniques are in *facebook* postings 40 university students were surveyed using a questionnaire. The result is listed in Table 3.

Table 3.
Helpful communication techniques to express emotions

Techniques	Percentage
Emoticons	15.9
Cinema Dialogues	14.6
Proverbs	14.5
Emotion Words	14.4
Punctuations	14.1
Linguistic Markers	13.4
Interjections	13.1

According to the respondents, emoticons seem to be the most helpful technique in expressing emotions in text-based communication. Table 2, which is based on online observation, however, shows that emoticons are the least used technique. Linguistic markers and punctuations are the most frequently used technique in expressing emotions by Tamil speakers but they are considered less helpful. The respondents also feel that cinema dialogues and proverbs are very helpful techniques to convey feeling. In reality, however, they do not use these techniques as frequently as linguistic markers or punctuations. This proves that the result in Table 2 contrast

with the results in Table 3. Only the use of emoticons and interjections seem to have a similar result in both Table 2 and Table 3. Emotion words are listed as the fourth helpful technique in Table 3 and listed as the third frequent technique in Table 2. Interjections are considered the least helpful technique and are therefore used very rarely.

CONCLUSION

The Tamil speakers who communicate in *facebook* use several techniques to express their emotions through text. Emotion words, linguistic markers, interjections, proverbs and cinema dialogues are the verbal cues used. Emoticons and punctuations are used as non-verbal cues in the same way as facial expressions and intonations which are used in F2F communication. Even though emoticons, cinema dialogues and proverbs are considered helpful they are used rarely in online communication. The Tamil speakers tend to use linguistic markers and punctuations more in their facebook communication.

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Journey through Nature and Self: The Melancholic Narrator in Atwood's *Surfacing*

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ABSTRACT

Julia Kristeva's melancholic subject is one who feels a sense of loss and cannot express herself openly. As a result of melancholia, the subject exhibits strange behaviour, loses her language, and isolate herself. As such, the melancholia is seen as a disorder of self-identity. It is the aim of this paper to discuss how Margaret Atwood's melancholic female subject in *Surfacing* goes on a quest-journey in the wilderness to deal with her sense of loss and regains a new life. In the initial part of her life, the protagonist is seen destroying herself through a loveless union with her husband, loss of her parents, and coerced abortion. As a melancholic subject, she is unable to express and share her grief with those around her. Her expedition in search of her missing father brings about new experiences in nature which eventually leads to her self-recognition as she finds ways to deal with her condition. This reading of Atwood's female protagonist as a melancholic subject provides a new depiction of how melancholia is healed through interaction with nature.

Keywords: Julia Kristeva, melancholic subject, nature, psychological quest, self-recognition

INTRODUCTION

Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing* has been critically viewed from many different perspectives, such as: dealing with the protagonist's divided self (McLay, 1975); the mother-daughter relationship (Thomas, 1988), language and logic (Clark, 1983), themes of psychological quests (Kroll, 2004), and madness (Ozdemir, 2003). None, however, theorizes the protagonist being a melancholic subject who goes on a painful journey to achieve an integrated

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personality and wholeness with the help of and unification with nature.

In Julia Kristeva's view, the melancholic subject suffers a sense of loss which is not communicable. As the melancholic subject delves into sorrow she has no interest in "words, action, and even life itself" (1980, p. 3). Kristeva believes that melancholia is a disorder of self-identity and sense of loss:

Abyss of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief that at times, and often on a long term basis, lays claims upon us to the extent of having us lose all interest in words, actions, and even life itself (Black Sun, 1980, p. 3).

The subject mourns for something lost. In the absence of the Thing, she feels loss and she cannot share this feeling with others. As a result of melancholia she cannot use language as she is a stranger to her mother tongue. Without language, she becomes a heterogenous subject rather than a unified one. She needs to use language in order to become an 'I'. In order to gain unified subjectivity one should enter the symbolic realm of language. In addition, the melancholic subject "I" isolate herself from the world, "I" withdraw into her sadness, "I" do not speak, "I" cry, and "I" may kill herself (Kristeva, 2000, p. 47).

The protagonist in Atwood's *Surfacing* is also the unnamed narrator who may be seen as a melancholic subject, as theorized by Kristeva. The discussion which follows is an analysis of Atwood's *Surfacing* in light of Kristeva's theory to provide a different

reading of her protagonist's characterisation. This paper sheds light on the unnamed melancholic narrator whose traumas are healed through her relation with nature.

The Melancholic Narrator in Atwood's Surfacing

In this novel, the unnamed narrator faces different losses in her life which lead her to a melancholic condition. As the novel opens the narrator expresses her sadness over her mother's death, as a result of illness, and after that her father who "simply disappeared and then vanished into nothing" (Atwood, 1998, p. 20). She has lost both of her parents and could not come to terms with these losses and these unresolved pasts return to her present mind repeatedly. In addition to the loss of her parents, she lost her husband through divorce and this lack of love in her life adds to the previous miseries. Moreover, she also lost her child through a forced abortion and admits that she has "to behave as though it does not exist, because for [her] it can't, it was taken away from [her], exported, departed ... a section of [her] own life, sliced off from [her] like a Siamese twin, [her] own flesh cancelled, lapse, relapse" (Atwood, 1998, p. 45). All these losses affect her tremendously and lead her to a state of melancholia.

The narrator's melancholic condition can be seen in her various strange behaviour of telling unnecessary excessive lies, of unexplained cruelty towards nature, and her eventual loss of language and withdrawal from the society. She tells lies to her friends about herself, her marriage, and her family.

She also does not disclose the fact to her parents that she has had an abortion and lies to them by saying that she has left her child with her husband. Although legally married to her husband, she feels that she is having an affair with a married man (after discovering that her legal husband has another wife). She “felt like an incubator” knowing that she is trapped in a loveless relationship (Atwood, 1998, p. 30). In her make-believe world, she is imprisoned and in love with the “wrong person” (Atwood, 1998, p. 36). When she is finally divorced by her bigamous husband, she feels that “a divorce is like an amputation, [she] survive[s] but there is less of [her]” (Atwood, 1998, p. 39).

The next melancholic condition of the narrator can be seen in her strange behaviour towards nature. During her journey into the wilderness, she cruelly kills a fish by stepping and whacking “it quickly with the knife” instead of waiting for the fish to go through a natural death without water (Atwood, 1998, p. 62). This shows the narrator's unexplained erratic behaviour towards nature. In addition to telling lies and her nonsensical behaviour toward nature, the narrator eventually loses language and wishes to be alone. As the narrator passes through nature during the initial part of the journey, she perceives that it becomes harder for her to communicate and she thinks “the words were coming out of [her] like the mechanical words from talking dolls, the kind with a pull tape at the back, the whole speech was unwinding” (Atwood, 1998, p. 87) as Kristeva posits “the depressed speak of nothing, they have

nothing to speak of “as they feel loss, a loss that cannot be expressed (1980, p. 51).

She cannot communicate through language as she feels that no one can understand her; as a result she turns into an inarticulate person and the language becomes foreign to her. In addition to being a stranger to her mother tongue, she feels numb within her body. “I did not feel awful, I realize I didn't feel much of anything” (Atwood, 1998, p. 106). Repeatedly, she refers to language: “I couldn't use it because it wasn't mine ... “ ”I'm trying to tell the truth”, “...The voice wasn't mine, it came from someone dressed as me imitating me” (Atwood, 1998, p. 107). As she cannot use language and share her feelings with others she feels that she “came apart. The other half, the one locked away, was the only one that could live; I was the wrong half, detached, terminal” (Atwood, 1998, p. 109). As a melancholic subject, she is “silent and without verbal or desiring bonds with others” (Kristeva, 1980, p. 30).

Nature as the Healing Power

The narrator's healing journey into the wilderness begins after she has undergone several incidences which lead to her revelation. In her journey, the narrator is initially accompanied by her current boyfriend, Joe, and her friends Anna and David (Anna is married to David). The incidence that changes her view of life is at the point when she saw a dead heron hanging from a tree. She suddenly feels an overwhelming feeling of anger towards the senseless killing of an innocent creature of

nature. This incidence floods her memories of her own cruelty dealing with her abortion and the killing of fish much earlier. If abortion was initially treated like “getting a wart removed” (Atwood, 1998, p. 169) and killing of the fish was seen as a normal mundane act of killing, now both are seen as an act of cruelty, of disrespect for nature. This subtle incident is an epiphany moment to the narrator which brings a turning point in her life. She suddenly becomes compassionate toward non-human creatures and surrounding.

Later on, during the course of her journey, the narrator becomes very much aware of the presence of nature as a living force. She dives into the lake and feels it very much alive: “I go off the dock and wade in from the shore, slowly, splashing water over my shoulders and neck, the cold climbing my thighs, my foot soles feel the sand and twigs and suck leaves” (Atwood, 1998, p. 72). She joins with nature and separates herself from her companion. She perceives that human and nature have an interrelationship because human’s behaviour toward nature is akin to living with other humans. From this epiphany onward, the narrator is a changed person. Unlike the previous episode of fishing when the narrator killed the fish senselessly, the narrator now refuses to kill fish as she considers herself part of nature.

If earlier in the story the narrator could not talk about her abortion, she now finds renewed energy to deal with her guilt. She is able to forgive herself when the memory of her aborted child comes into her

mind. The narrator becomes determined to have a unified self in order not to be numb anymore, “language divides us into fragments, I wanted to be whole” (Atwood, 1998, p. 147). Through her relation with nature, it becomes easy for her to confess her lies about her husband to herself:

he did say he loved me though, that was true; I didn't make it up. It was the night I locked myself in and turned on the water in the bathtub and he cried on the other side of the door. When I gave up and came out he showed me snapshots of his wife and children, his reasons, his stuffed and mounted family, they had names, he said I should be mature (Atwood, 1998, p. 150).

She comes to realise that the man with whom she married is not a single, but a married man with children who asks her to be rational after informing her that he is already married to another woman. Little by little the narrator heals her traumatic memories through nature. In fact, “surfacing” is a gerund, indicating process and activity rather than a completed action. Surfacing charts a change in the narrator’s subjective perception of reality, as she shifts from a position of alienation and victimhood to a new sense of the vital relationship between herself as human and land which inhabits (Howell, 2005, p. 49).

When the narrator was informed by her friends that her father was missing, they think “[she] should be filled with death,

[she] should be in mourning" (Atwood, 1998, p. 160); but in fact, she is not in mourning as she is part of nature now and knows that life and death are parts of nature, and no one can do anything about them because "nothing has died, everything is alive" (Atwood, 1998, p. 170). She feels there is no reason for her to mourn now that she has come to terms with the natural cycle of death and birth. Besides feeling fresh, with the help of nature, she is dealing with the traumatic problem of her abortion: "I can feel my lost child surfacing within me, rising from the lake where it has been poisoned for so long, its eyes and teeth phosphorescent" (Atwood, 1998, p. 165).

Her shattered mind as a result of losses has now healed as she passes through trauma with the magical help of nature and unification with it: "The animals have no need for speech, why talk when you are a word I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning I break out again into the bright sun and crumple, head against the ground" (Atwood, 1998, p. 187). As she becomes part of nature, she uses her own language to express herself; as she is nature and animals are words, she is words, too. From then on, she communicates with others in a new way: "As she merges with nature, she resists the rules of syntax and punctuation. She no longer regards language as necessary to being" (Petrilli, 2007, p. 47).

Therefore, in relation to nature, she does not feel any need to use rational discourse to communicate. She intends to use the language of nature because it is "one of the languages there are no nouns, only verbs

held for a longer moment" (Atwood, 1998, p. 32). She learns how to use the language of nature rather than any symbolic language which has lost its meaning for her. As Ward argues the narrator's "metamorphosis into a languageless being allows her passage into another world where she hopes to find another language that will guide her to some kind of truth" (2007, p. 49). As she uses the language of nature, she feels so secure within nature because as part of nature, nothing can harm her anymore: "if I go into the swamp, among the dead tree roots, I'll be safe, they'd have to wade for me, the mud is soft, they'll sink like bulldozers" (Atwood, 1998, p. 191).

The more she interacts with nature, the more she comes to terms with her feelings and grief. She feels her "feeling was beginning to seep back into" her, she is "tangled like a foot that's been asleep" (Atwood, 1998, p. 171). Her numb body becomes responsive as a result of her relation to nature, and now she feels her own desires, sorrows and satisfaction and gets rid of her emotionally numb condition: "I can remember him, fake husband, more clearly, though, and now I feel nothing for him but sorrow" (Atwood, 1998, p. 195). She not only returns to reality but also gets rid of her feelings of emptiness. Unlike before, when she was unable to feel anything, now she has feelings of sorrow for her deceitful husband. Besides, she perceives that her unwanted abortion led her to refute her ability to "negotiate within rational discourse successfully" (Petrilli, 2007, p. 78). At the end of the novel, she is able to

communicate with others through language, and she is satisfied that she has “words that can be understood” (Atwood, 1998, p. 196). She decides to leave wilderness and return back to city as she is able to accept the imperfections in the world and she perceives that she cannot withdraw into isolation. She has re-entered the realm of language, dealt with her traumas, and achieved a unified self.

CONCLUSION

The unnamed melancholic narrator suffers from melancholia; therefore she cannot use language to articulate her losses. Her psyche is shattered into many pieces as she has lost part of herself through her abortion, divorce, and parents’ deaths. However, with the help of nature and her experiences in it, she learns how to deal with her repressed memories and unresolved grief and come to terms with them. Thus she acquires the language of nature to communicate and express her sense of loss. Finally, instead of a fragmented self, she gains an integrated personality and reaches wholeness. Tracing Atwood’s protagonist in *Surfacing* as a melancholic subject gives us an in-depth understanding of her predicament and how she eventually overcomes her situation.

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What Happens When Islamic Capital Markets Move Away From Tax Neutrality – A Look At Oman & Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

This article evaluates how tax reforms affect stock prices of local and foreign firms in Oman and Saudi Arabia. Both countries introduced corporate tax on foreign firms, exempting local firms from corporate tax, when they moved away from a pre-existing Islamic tax neutrality policy. These reforms were implemented in 2009 in Oman and in 2004 in Saudi Arabia. These tax reform events – applying to foreign firms and not applying to local firms in the same markets – offer ideal experimental situations in two economies to test the taxation theories on how stock prices must react. We find that the results support the Modigliani-Miller and Elton-Gruber tax theories in two ways. Firstly, foreign firms that had their taxes reduced experienced stock price increases. Secondly, local firms not subjected to tax or tax reduction showed no visible tax effect. These are theory-consistent findings in the unique tax environments in these two Islamic countries, which moved away from tax neutrality, enabling us to obtain very clear evidence on modern theories of taxation. In our view, this evidence is significantly important addition to the literature on tax and taxation and for those contemplating a move away from Islamic tax neutrality.

Keywords: Corporate tax reform, Islamic tax-neutrality policy, announcement effect, corporation incomes, ex-dividend days

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INTRODUCTION

This article has two objectives: measuring stock price changes when corporate tax laws changed in two Islamic countries, moving away from tax neutrality to modern taxation practices). Prior to this reform,

both countries had entrenched tax rules that did not tax any incomes of corporations or individuals. The second aim is to verify if stock price changes are consistent with the dividend tax effect theories in finance and financial economics. With the practice of traditional Islamic tax neutrality, historically both countries uniquely did not also have dividend and capital gains taxes nor corporate or income taxes until a very high corporate tax was imposed in some time back but only on foreign firms (Jalili, 2006).

In recent years, taking cognition of low rates of corporate taxes in most countries, Oman first and Saudi Arabia later reduced the tax rates substantially. These corporate tax reduction events in these two countries have yet to be studied despite the events offering unique situations for testing tax theories. The two taxation theories to be explained in this paper predict that asset prices are insensitive to specific tax laws if there is no tax on taxable incomes and if there is no change. These countries provide an ideal experimental situation as their reforms changed Islamic tax neutrality by introducing corporate tax only on corporations before-tax income while not taxing the dividend incomes accruing to shareholders with no capital gains tax in both cases.

These two countries have previously implemented progressive corporate tax rates only on foreign firms mainly to gather revenue from non-domestic firms: note that, under tax neutrality, the domestic firm's incomes were not taxed. Local firms enjoyed no corporate tax as had been

historically practised under Islamic tax neutrality. Besides this, these countries have vast revenues to conduct their government functions without imposing any corporate tax on local firms. We analysed the effect of an unexpected change in the tax policy, which was a reduction in the corporate tax rate on foreign firms while preserving tax neutrality for individuals and locally-owned firms. Under taxation theories, tax reductions or tax eliminations (as in the case of the Bush-Obama laws during 2003 and 2012: see Aslam *et al.*, 2012) are viewed as conveying good news by investors in foreign-owned firms, hence stock prices are expected to rise.

In Oman, corporate income tax was introduced in 1981 for all firms; nevertheless, it was immediately amended to provide exemption for local firms, so under Islamic tax neutrality, there was no tax levied on local firms. The exemption for local firms was lifted in 1993, where local corporate income was taxed at between 5 to 30 %, with a maximum rate of 50 % for foreign firms. Our concern was with foreign firms experiencing large falls in tax rates from 50 to 12 %. In 2009, the government introduced a flat reduced tax rate for all firms, including domestic firms, to 12 %, as in the case of China, which did a similar reform in 2005. The new tax law took effect on 1 January 2010: a reduction was considered good news for all firms, both local and foreign. Local firms had their tax reduced from a maximum of 30 to 12 % while the foreign firms had their taxes reduced from 50 % to 12 %; the latter is obviously noteworthy. Also, in

Oman there were the same zero dividend incomes and capital gains taxes. This new income tax law only affected corporations. Individuals were not subject to taxation on any income.

In Saudi Arabia, the imposition of corporate tax of foreign firms was made even earlier, in the 1950s: the rate varied from 25 to 45 % of corporate pre-tax incomes. The tax did not apply to firms with local ownership, unlike in Oman. Furthermore, oil investment firms were required to pay a tax rate of 85 %, which is an oil-royalty-type payment. After some pressure from foreign firms and international organisations, the Saudi government gave serious consideration to lowering the tax rate. In 2003 (also moving away from historical tax neutrality), after considerable debate, the new law reduced the tax rate to 25 %, which is a substantial change, and this was good news for foreign firms. Nevertheless, the Crown Prince through a royal edict managed to push the rate even lower to 20 % at the time of signing the law into effect on 15 August 2004.

The rest of the paper is divided into three more sections. Section 2 is a very brief statement on relevant tax theories, while the methodology is explained in section 3. The results are presented thereafter in section 4 with a short conclusion found in section 5. The overall result affirmed the predictions of the two tax theories and is explained in the next section: the ideal environment provides a clean test situation.

BRIEF REVIEW OF TAX LITERATURE

Our research is rooted in the well-known literature of Modigliani and Miller (1958) on corporate taxation and the announcement effect studies that abound in finance literature. This theory suggests that when there is no tax of any kind, as in Islamic tax neutrality, a firm's value is invariant to debt funding. That is, there would be no tax advantage in acquiring either debt or equity. Hence, any combination of securities as equity or debt (say *sukuk* debt under Islamic laws) is as good as any other combination. This could be written as:

$$V_L = V_U, \text{ if } \tau_c = 0 \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

where the value of levered firm (V_L) is equal to the value of unlevered firm (V_U) when corporate tax does not exist with no tax-deductibility of interest payments (*sukuk* dividends). That is, with tax neutrality for local firms in these two Islamic nations, tax should not affect domestic stock prices in our two cases although foreign firms would be affected by tax laws. Unlike in most developed and developing countries, there is also no capital gains nor is there personal income taxation under tax neutrality. Thus, if tax is introduced in Oman and Saudi Arabia on foreign firms only, only those firms in the share market should react to the news as foreign firms in Saudi Arabia are the only ones that had tax reduced in 2003, which was good news. This is a unique event, so it deserves to be examined to investigate how the theory-suggested stock price effect would play out in this unique tax situation without the additional complication of

testing this effect in countries with dividend tax and capital gains tax as is the case in most countries practising other tax policies.

Nevertheless, it must be recorded here that the value of levered and unlevered firms would be different if corporate tax were imposed ($\tau_c \neq 0$) as per a revision to the above theory by the same authors (Modigliani & Miller, 1963), hereafter MM. The value of the levered firm would increase by the amount of tax deduction on interest payment, which is sourced from debts. This theory, while not tested in this paper, is very much so worth studying in detail.

Taxation effect can also be observed from the ex-dividend day share price behaviour since investors price stocks on the basis of “after-tax” dividend flows if there are dividend tax and capital gains tax. In both our markets, these taxes are set to zero under tax neutrality. It is widely observed that price would generally decline around an ex-date since payment of dividends on the ex-date is cash outflow. Elton and Gruber (1970) outlined a basic model to measure average share price decline where both these taxes are implemented:

$$\frac{P_B - P_A}{Div} = \frac{1 - \tau_p}{1 - \tau_{cg}} \quad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

The calculation is derived from an equilibrium equation that implies investors’ indifference towards dividends or capital gains from selling stocks when dividend tax and capital gains tax are the same. Referring to the above equation, the changes in share price before ex-date (P_B) and after ex-date

(P_A) is reflected in the difference in dividend and capital gains tax, provided no arbitrage. This is a relevant theory for testing if the tax effect is zero as in our two cases given the unique situation that there is no capital gains and dividend tax.

Nevertheless, the theory has drawn some criticism. Some researchers have acknowledged that the price drop is due to short term arbitrage (Kalay, 1982; 1984) and also to the microstructure effect on prices, or that the drop is associated with the market frictions such as price-discreteness and bid-ask bounce (Bali & Hite, 1998; Frank & Jagannathan, 1998; Dubofski, 1992). However, these explanations are mostly irrelevant to our investigation as in our study, capital gains and dividend taxes were zero. Therefore, it is important to conduct research in a tax-controlled environment such as that in Saudi Arabia and Oman.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Two basic methods were employed to pursue the research objectives: (1) event study method on corporate tax event announcement effects, and (2) measurement of the average share price decline on the ex-dividend date. MM’s theory would suggest that the value of the firm would have to go up if corporations paid less tax: see Eq. (1). As per Eq. (2), the stock price decline ratio at the time of ex-dividend days should be equal to the amount of dividends, so that the ratio of dividend-to-stock price is equal to 1.

The well-entrenched event study method was applied as outlined by MacKinlay (1997) to investigate the impact of the

announcement effect. Event dates were selected from the formal announcement by the government that was found in news available from Factiva database. This was due to a lack of English news publications available, especially in the early 1990s. The news report also confirmed the available law report found on the government website. The firms' data were collected from Datastream, a database provided by Thomson-Reuters. The database includes adjusted share price, main index price, dividend yield, firm capitalisation and debt-to-equity ratio. Also, to estimate the expected return, we applied the widely used market model method (MacKinlay, 1997). Results were then validated through computation of t-test to see whether the announcement provided a significant impact across event windows (Brown & Warner, 1984).

The second measurement was the average price decline on the ex-dividend day. We applied the classic Elton-Gruber (1970) model to measure this tax effect:

$$\frac{P_B - P_A}{Div} = \frac{1 - \tau_p}{1 - \tau_{cg}}$$

If personal tax on dividends (numerator) is zero along with capital gains tax also being zero, the stock price drop to dividend ratio must be equal to 1, as the term on the right-hand side reduces to 1.00. The average price decline is expected to be 1 or significantly not different from 1, since the dividend tax rate is equal to the capital gains tax rate. Bell and Jenkinson's (2002) method is also

conducted as a way of verifying the results through OLS (Ordinary Least Square) regression:

$$\left(\frac{P_{cum} - P_{ex}}{P_{cum}} \right) = \alpha + \beta \left(\frac{Div}{P_{cum}} \right)_i + e_i \quad \text{Eq. (3)}$$

Deriving the equation from the Elton-Gruber model, the average price drop ratio could also be estimated from the slope coefficient in the regression. Corrections for heteroskedasticity were carried out using the Newey-West (1987) method and we also allowed for non-zero intercept as this would avoid biased estimates of the slope coefficient.

EVIDENCE OF TAX EFFECT ON ANNOUNCEMENTS OF TAX RATE REVISIONS

Announcement Effect on Foreign Firms

In this section, we present the findings of the announcement effect measurements: see summary test statistics in Table 1 and 2.

It must be noted that the windows we used were short windows as is the practice in such studies; later we widened the windows, which yielded different numbers. It was found that the announcement of changes to the corporate tax laws had a positive effect on the portfolio of foreign firms.

In the case of Oman, the portfolio of foreign firms showed a highly positive significant price effect measured as Cumulative Average Abnormal Returns (CAAR) around the issuance dates of the law on 1 June, 2009.

TABLE 1
Oman Foreign and Local Firms, CAARs

Event Date		-1 to 0	0 to +1	-1 to +1	Others	
25/5/2009	Foreign	18.159	1.462	1.570		
Law passed		(4.565)**	(0.363)	(0.318)		
	Local	0.306	1.269	1.731		
		(0.124)	(0.515)	(0.573)		
1/6/2009	Foreign	-0.195	16.831	16.493	16.978	0 to +9
Law issued		(-0.048)	(4.382)***	(3.377)***	(1.904)*	
	Local	0.051	-0.276	-0.752	-0.178	
		(0.021)	(-0.113)	(-0.251)	(-0.032)	

Note: Available firm sample is 6 for foreign firms and 97 for local firms. Level of significance is noted with asterisks, *(0.1), **(0.05) and ***(0.01).

Table 2:
Saudi Arabia Foreign-Local Portfolio CAARs

		-1 to 0	0 to +1	-1 to +1	Others	
5/1/2004	Foreign	0.564	0.262	0.336		
Shura voting		(1.351)	(0.364)	(0.536)		
	Local	0.625	-0.063	0.662		
		(1.212)	(-0.455)	(0.748)		
12/1/2004	Foreign	0.476	0.636	0.590		
Law passed		(0.839)	(1.560)	(1.165)		
	Local	0.803	0.753	0.907		
		(1.622)	(1.381)	(1.737)*		
30/7/2004	Foreign	-0.953	-0.393	-1.357		
Effective date		(-0.976)	(-0.945)	(-1.601)		
	Local	0.319	0.7548	1.043		
		(1.244)	(1.090)	(1.720)*		
15/8/2004	Foreign	1.056	1.582	3.0126	6.122	-3 to +3
Law announcement		(0.585)	(0.679)	(1.423)	(2.542)***	
	Local	-0.068	-0.757	-0.054	2.100	
		(-0.299)	(-0.027)	(-0.017)	(1.246)	

Available sample of firm is about 4 to 6 for non-Saudi owned firms and 12 to 22 for Saudi-owned firms. The level of significance is noted with asterisks, *(0.1), **(0.05) and ***(0.01).

The local firms with no tax effect from being excluded from tax did not have any significant tax effect: CAAR (-1 to 0) is 0.306 % with no significant t-value. The foreign stocks gained a 18.159 % gain

since these firms would have a significant reduction in tax payments from 50 % reduced to 12 %. In the literature on tax effect, this is perhaps the largest CAAR observed in any country. The tax effect

was obvious in all but one test window for foreign firms. Similarly, the sample on Saudi Arabia firms also yielded similar stock price behaviour.

We found that there was one significant positive price reaction as measured by the CAAR of foreign firms around the announcement date of 15 August, 2004. The tax effect was more complicated in the case of Saudi Arabia. Consistent with the more simple situation of this tax reform, no local firms were affected as these firms had no laws changed requiring taxes to be reduced. So, all the tests showed that there was no significant tax effect in any of the tested windows for local firms. With no unexpected change in tax laws, there was no information effect at all for local firms. In the case of foreign firms, the law was pretty much uncertain until the Crown Prince took the initiative to reduce the tax rate by law. Hence, in the windows traditionally used in event studies (-1 to 0; 0 to +1; etc.) there was no observable impact. However, when the amendments to the law were done, it became clear there was a delayed impact in the period -3 to +3 test window. The CAAR was 6.122 %, and the t-value was significant at 0.01 acceptance level.

Thus, the behaviour of local firms conformed to the information effect theory in that there was no unexpected change in tax rate, so there was no effect. The tax reform did affect only the foreign firms.

Ex-dividend Day Price Effects

As for the ex-dividend day share price behaviour, the calculated average price-drop

(APD)-to-dividend ratio (using adjusted price and dividends) was found to be close to the theory-hypothesised value of 1. The APD value of 0.996 was not significantly different from 1: the test was done to see if the measured coefficient (0.996 in column 2) was different from 1.00 (see Table 3.1). The test was done in two parts, with and without outlier trimming. The “adjusted” results were after winsorian data trimming for outliers 2.5 standard deviations. The data series with very small dividends tended to have an extreme APD, so winsorian testing was needed. The second sample was without outlier trimming: the results were misleading, so we present the results to justify why winsorising the observations was important in this research.

Table 3.1
Average Price Drop, Omani Firms

The table summarises the calculation of the Elton-Gruber model of average price drop-to-dividend ratio. The calculated average price drop (APD) omits the outliers through winsorisation and exclusion of low dividend and non-trading data.

	APD (Adjusted)	APD (Unadjusted)
Average	0.996	2.768
N	69	112
T-value	(-0.077)	(5.949)***

Level of significance is noted with asterisks, *** (0.01).

The theory states that if there are no capital gains and personal tax, stock price formation should ignore any tax effect on the dividends, just as found for Oman. Note that the t-value of -0.077 was not significantly different from 1.00. The unadjusted values are shown here to indicate

Table 3.2
Regression Analysis of Price Drop Ratio, Omani Firms

The regression refers to price-drop-to-dividend ratio during the period 2004 to 2012 using the adjusted price and dividend data. The last two columns are the result after the intercept was dropped. F-statistic was not indicated in that regression. The regression was heteroskedasticity corrected using the Newey-West method as provided in EViews.

C	DIV/P	Adj. R2	F-Stat	DIV/P	Adj. R2
0.068	0.174	0.034	2.700	1.029	0.513
(6.563)***	(1.377)			(9.371)***	
0.000	0.175			0.000	

Level of significance is noted with asterisks, *** (0.01).

that the adjustment for dividend, if not done correctly, would have given the opposite result of a significant change.

As a robustness testing, we also ran the Bell and Jenkinson’s model (see Eq. 3) to further verify the significant relationship between the ex-day price drop, $(P_{cum} - P_{ex})/P_{cum}$ and dividend, Div/P_{cum} . In the initial regression, the variable was not significant, with a coefficient of 0.174, which is further away from our hypothesis. The ratio might be a bit biased since the intercept was suppressed to zero. Nevertheless, after the intercept was dropped, the coefficient became significant with a p-value of less than 0.01, whereas the coefficient was 1.029 (see Table 3.2). It was indeed very close to our hypothesis ratio of 1.

The results for Saudi Arabia also provide similar evidence of no effect on stock prices on the ex-dividend days. The average price drop ratio was 0.994, which is in line with the hypothesised value of 1 as predicted by the Elton-Gruber Model (see Table 4.1). Thus, this value was also not significantly different from 1 as shown by the low t-value of -0.152, that is, the pricing behaviour of the investors on the “after-tax

cash flow” basis takes into account that there is zero capital gains and dividend tax rates for investors, such that the price drop was exactly equal to the dividends.

Table 4.1
Average Price Drop, Saudi Firms

The table summarises the calculation of Elton-Gruber model of average price drop-to[dividend ratio. The calculated average price drop (APD) omits the outliers through winsorisation and exclusion of low dividend and non-trading data.

	APD (Adjusted)	APD (Unadjusted)
Average	0.994	1.505
N	159	215
T-value	(-0.152)	(3.572)***

Level of significance is noted with asterisks, * (0.10) and *** (0.01).

It is worthwhile noting that tests on several countries have shown that this price drop ratio is significantly away from 1.00: the ratio is 0.76 for the US in one study, which is what one would expect with an average US tax rate of about 34 % in that country during the test period. The unadjusted numbers are not reliable, and we show that number to emphasise the point that without winsorising the observations, we would end up with a wrong conclusion.

Table 4.2
Regression Analysis of Price Drop Ratio, Saudi Firms

The regression refers to price drop-to-dividend ratio during the period of 2004 to 2012 using the adjusted price and dividend data. The last two columns are the result after the intercept was dropped. The F-statistic was not indicated in that regression. The regression was heteroskedasticity corrected using the Newey-West method as provided in EViews.

C	DIV/P	Adj. R2	F-Stat	DIV/P	Adj. R2
0.005	0.840	0.414	116.891	0.969	0.405
(1.384)	(7.376)***		000.00	(13.105)***	
0.168	0.000			0.000	

Level of significance is noted with asterisks, *** (0.01).

Table 5
Oman Foreign and Local Portfolio AARs

	1/6/2009 (Law issued)			
	Foreign		Local	
	AAR	T-Statistic	AAR	T-Statistic
-5	5.262	(1.801)*	-0.156	(-0.270)
-4	-4.083	(-0.187)	1.425	(4.318)***
-3	0.215	(0.244)	-0.360	(-1.064)
-2	0.571	(0.810)	0.691	(1.917)*
-1	-0.314	(-0.510)	-0.476	(-1.704)*
0	0.066	(0.076)	0.527	(0.511)
+1	4.168	(0.345)	-0.804	(-2.791)***
+2	-0.932	(-1.776)*	-1.490	(-4.925)***
+3	-1.502	(-1.461)	-2.424	(-3.650)***
+4	0.793	(0.611)	0.755	(1.896)*
+5	-0.358	(-0.242)	-1.448	(-3.919)***
+6	1.449	(2.109)**	-1.448	(-3.919)***
+7	0.168	(0.059)	1.083	(-0.581)
+8	1.464	(2.031)**	1.639	(5.727)***
+9	1.561	(2.203)**	0.452	(1.514)
+10	-0.523	(-0.886)	-0.949	(-3.020)***

Note: Available firm sample is 20 for foreign firms and 97 for local firms. Level of significance is noted with asterisks, *(0.1), **(0.05) and ***(0.01).

Robustness testing: Using the Bell-Jenkinson model, we ran a regression of the price drop variable, $(P_{cum} - P_{\alpha})/P_{cum}$ against the dividend, Div/P_{cum} (see Eq. 3). We found that there was a positive significant relationship (p-value < 0.01) indicating the relevance of dividends, with a coefficient value of

0.84. After suppressing the intercept, the coefficient was found to be 0.969, which was very close to our initial hypothesised ratio of 1. The adjusted R-squared seemed to be reasonable at 0.414 and 0.405, before and after the intercept was dropped, respectively. Also, the F-statistic indicated a significant

goodness of fit. The summary of result is shown in Table 4.2.

Similar to the findings for Omani firms, Saudi firms also had a similar interpretation of tax effect on the ex-dividend days. In a tax-controlled environment, where dividend and capital gains are not taxed, the share prices appear to drop by the same amount of dividends, on average.

AAR and Plots of the CAAR for Oman and Saudi Arabia

The daily AARs over the event days -5 to day +10 are shown in Table 5 for Oman. We report daily average abnormal returns (AARs) around announcement days for Oman and Saudi Arabia over -5 and +10 days. As for the stock returns in Oman, it was observed that there was a mixed price effect around the days when the bill was passed into law on the 25 May, 2009. Our test windows were much wider than those used in tests discussed in the earlier section. The results were different owing to the delayed impact or lack of investor reaction over different stages of the bill going through till it was passed or amended by the Crown Prince (in Saudi Arabia). There was a large AAR of 5.2 % in the case of foreign firms, where change in price was a significant change acceptable at the p-value < 0.1 during the day of passing the bill. The local firms did not have any significant AAR: the AAR -0.156 %.

The plots of the CAARs are found in Figure 1. There was a highly significant CAAR of about 5 % when the law came into force on 1 June, 2009. One could also note

Event Date: 1/6/2009 (Law issued)

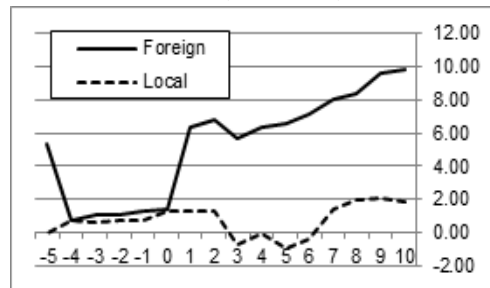


Fig 1: Stock price Reactions in Oman Around Event

that the price reaction of the foreign firms was much more prominent because these firms would enjoy a large cut in tax.

Daily AARs for both local and foreign firms are reported in Table 6.

As for Saudi Arabia, there were two events pertaining to the corporate tax changes applicable only to the foreign firms; the date of passing the bill into law was 6 January, 2004. The issuance of the amended law lowering the tax rate was on 15 August, 2004.

Although there were positive changes in price indicating that the market was reacting to the news as good news, none of the individual day changes in prices were statistically significant. One explanation for this is that, under Saudi parliamentary (Shura) procedures, the law can be changed by the rulers after Parliament has passed it. Hence, it is possible that the investors would only react after the ruler had signed the law into effect. This is similar to the US practice of the President passing the law into effect. Hence, we would expect a delayed effect on the day the law came into force. However, it appears that the news was treated as good news, but there was no significant upward price revision as in Oman.

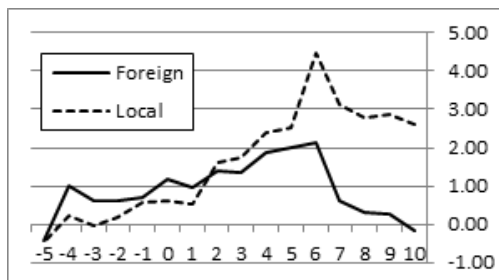
Table 6
Saudi Foreign and Local AARs

	Foreign				Local			
	6/1/2004		15/8/2004		6/1/2004		15/8/2004	
	Bill being voted		Law issued		Bill being voted		Law issued	
	AAR	T-Stat	AAR	T-Stat	AAR	T-Stat	AAR	T-Stat
-5	-0.407	(-0.245)	0.028	(-0.022)	-0.464	(-0.306)	0.299	(0.119)
-4	1.394	(0.503)	0.160	(0.142)	0.683	(0.433)	-0.119	(-0.034)
-3	-0.392	(-0.222)	0.175	(0.051)	-0.267	(-0.167)	0.637	(0.278)
-2	0.030	(0.093)	1.283	(0.689)	0.233	(0.131)	0.482	(0.564)
-1	0.073	(-0.007)	1.431	(0.668)	0.391	(0.198)	0.703	(0.465)
0	0.491	(0.312)	-0.375	(-0.316)	0.037	(0.107)	-0.771	(-0.521)
+1	-0.228	(-0.144)	1.957	(0.803)	-0.100	(-0.079)	0.014	(-0.044)
+2	0.445	(0.188)	0.449	(0.028)	1.079	(0.683)	0.209	(-0.077)
+3	-0.046	(-0.254)	1.202	(0.553)	0.154	(0.004)	0.826	(0.731)
+4	0.522	(0.151)	-0.926	(-0.480)	0.649	(0.437)	-0.010	(0.086)
+5	0.114	(0.020)	0.053	(0.069)	0.104	(0.032)	0.806	(0.543)
+6	0.143	(0.145)	-0.358	(-0.242)	1.964	(1.229)	0.018	(-0.102)
+7	-1.544	(-0.626)	-0.942	(-0.549)	-1.352	(-0.766)	-0.290	(-0.358)
+8	-0.276	(-0.171)	-0.290	(-0.158)	-0.339	(-0.155)	0.807	(0.842)
+9	-0.068	(-0.001)	0.116	(0.186)	0.075	(0.036)	-0.190	(-0.291)
+10	-0.412	(-0.140)	-0.021	(0.344)	-0.241	(-0.299)	-0.934	(-0.865)

We plotted the AARs for both local and foreign firms' portfolio (see Figure 2). It can be noted that there was a significant upward price change of about 3 % for foreign firms over the window from day -3 to +3 days after the ruler had passed the law into effect on 15 August, 2004. Thus, there was a 6.2

% change in recognition of the ruler further lowering the tax rate that Parliament had passed, but the ruler had lowered it for foreign firms. It is not surprising therefore for this unique legal practice to have been the reason for the investors' delaying their reaction until the ruler affirmed the tax

Event Date: 12/1/2004 (Law passed)



Event Date: 15/8/2004 (Law issued)

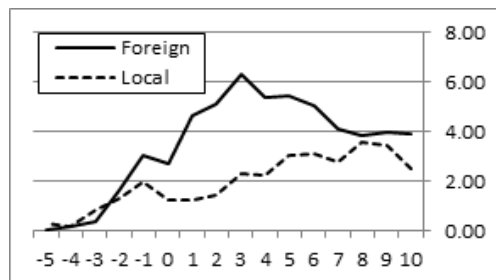


Fig 2: Stock Price Reactions in Saudi Arabia Around Tax Reform Events

reduction with a further lowering of tax from 24 % to 12 %. Earlier events thus went off without significant change to prices. The local firms also reacted sympathetically although our tests showed that there were no significant changes to prices.

CONCLUSION

Analysing theory-relevant tax effects on tax-exempt countries such as Oman and Saudi Arabia provided a clean test situation with identical samples although both countries practised different tax laws. Foreign firms had corporate taxes while locally-owned firms were exempt from corporate tax or only the foreign firms had a huge reduction in the tax rate after the reform. Further, unlike most modern economies where there is capital gains and dividend income taxes, both Oman and Saudi Arabia have zero capital gains and zero dividend taxes. Thus, a study of these two countries (there are a few more; see Aslam *et al.*, 2014) with their unique tax environments is worthwhile in testing the taxation theories. However, these two countries are the ones with (Islamic) tax neutrality moving to modern tax policies whereas most other countries have personal income taxes, which is absent in Oman and Saudi Arabia. This is the motivation for the study to test the theory in a much more ideal environment than is possible in any other markets.

A further motivation is much more general in nature and is relevant for the study of Islamic capital market behaviour. Islamic countries rely very little, historically, on corporate, income, capital gains and

dividend taxation. This is not the case for Islamic countries that came under colonial rule, when the colonisers introduced all sorts of taxes, ignoring the centuries-old tax neutrality policy practised there previously. Further, most resource-endowed Islamic countries tended to rely on revenues other than tax to meet government expenses. We characterise such Islamic taxation regimes as “tax-neutrality regimes” in comparison with the countries with a multitude of taxes because these countries preserved the pre-1903 tax environment, during which time almost the whole world relied upon excise tax, land tax and wealth tax (and a few non-income related taxes) for revenue. It was in 1903 that, for the first time, a new form of taxation, the corporate tax, was introduced by the US government: in that year the rate was set at 3 % of the pre-tax corporate income.

Our attempt in this paper is to reveal how taxation policies away from a tax-neutrality environment may affect stock price behaviour using the Modigliani and Miller (1958) and Elton and Gruber (1970) theories on taxation. The announcement effect of tax reduction in Oman and Saudi Arabia on foreign firms appeared to serve as good news. The abnormal return to this event was a large increase in stock prices around the time of the tax reduction event in both countries. These findings were strong enough to confirm that in a controlled environment, announcement effects are quite clear and non-controversial. These results are consistent with the Miller-Modigliani prediction that a lowering of tax would

increase cash flow to the shareholders, and hence the value of the firms would increase.

Further, to test robustness, we tested whether the price-to-dividend drop ratio on the ex-dividend days were as per the Elton-Gruber Model. Robustness testing was also done using the Bell-Jenkinson Model. The results showed that after winsorising the observations for outliers, the price drop ratio was exactly equal to 1.00 as tested using t-tests. This was so for both Oman and Saudi Arabia, two economies that have yet to introduce capital gains and dividend taxation.

Tests carried out using US, Malaysia and Singapore data on the days of tax law changes for dividend tax rates have shown results consistent with the two theories as well (Aslam *et al.*, 2012; Aslam *et al.*, 2014). Taken together, these findings in this paper using data from Oman and Saudi Arabia would suggest that both stock market reactions to tax law changes (in these cases only corporate tax rate reductions) are consistent with the theory predictions: (i) there should be no price drop if the capital gains and dividend tax rates are zero; and (ii) reductions in corporate tax rates constitute as good news, so the stock prices must increase from anticipated increases in cash flow to shareholders of foreign firms in both countries tested.

Our results have some caveats. We mentioned that there were serious outlier problems, which we fixed by robust statistical procedures. The trading intensity was not very high in Oman, which may have introduced errors in the results. However,

we noted that trading was quite brisk at the times of dividend payments (ex-dates) and when the law was passed into effect. There are other ways of testing the tax effect, although we relied upon the more widely used tests. Finally, these results should be further corroborated in future when more observations and possible tax law changes take place in tax-neutrality countries. There are 56 majority-Muslim countries, and a number of them still practice tax neutrality.

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An EFL On-line Writing: Exploring Its Gains <i>Luciana</i>	139
Factors Affecting the Employment of Arabic Language Learning Strategies Among Religious Secondary School Students <i>Kamarul, S. M. T</i>	155
Stress Among Thai Farm Workers Under Globalization: A Causal Model <i>Kaewanuchit, C., Muntaner, C., Labonte, R. and Johnson, D. A.</i>	169
Exploiting the Potential of Project-Based Instruction Benefiting from Authentic Atmosphere, Authentic Materials and Interactive Multimedia: An Attempt to Improve Students 'English Proficiency' <i>Agustina, L., Handoyo, F. and Budiprayitno, B.</i>	183
The Expectation and Satisfaction of the First Time and Return Tourists toward the Heritage Attractions in Melaka <i>Jamil Jusoh, Nor Fatimah Abd Hamid, Nurul 'Ulyani Mohd Najib</i>	195
Market-based Valuation Multiples: Evidence from Agribusiness Sector <i>Chin Fei Goh, Amran Rasli, Krzysztof Dziekonski and Saif-Ur-Rehman Khan</i>	209
EFL Learners' Selective Listening Ability: Cocktail Party Effect <i>Javad Hayatdavoudi</i>	223
Expressing Emotions in Words: <i>Facebook</i> Text-based Comments in Tamil <i>Malarvizhi Sinayah, Paramasivam Muthusamy, Kannan Narayanan and Normaliza bt Abd Rahim</i>	233
Journey through Nature and Self: The Melancholic Narrator in Atwood's <i>Surfacing</i> <i>Kamelia Talebian Sedehi and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya</i>	247
What Happens When Islamic Capital Markets Move Away From Tax Neutrality – A Look At Oman & Saudi Arabia <i>Selamat, A., Ariff, M. and Shamsher M.</i>	253

Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities
Vol. 23 (1) Mar. 2015

Contents

Foreword	i
<i>Nayan Deep S. Kanwal</i>	
Invited Article	
Life-Long Education for the Global Workforce in the Socio-Engineering Age	iii
<i>Namita Arora and Vijay K. Arora</i>	
Regular Articles	
Informal Learning in Malaysian Banks: Evidence and Scenarios	1
<i>Khoo, S. L.</i>	
The Parallel Quest for Identity in Hedayat's <i>The Blind Owl</i> and Faulkner's <i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	21
<i>Pedram Lalbakhsh and Pouria Torkamaneh</i>	
The Relationship between Personality Types and the Type of Correction in EFL Writing Skill	35
<i>Nasrin Shokrpour and Shadab Moslehi</i>	
Architectural Changes and Motivational Factors for Post-Earthquake House Transformation in Lar City, Iran	47
<i>Mohammad Parva, Kamariah Dola and Farzad Pour Rahimian</i>	
Conceptualising Malaysian Labour Law Syllabus Through Economic Analysis of Law: A Trans-disciplinary Approach	67
<i>Kamal Halili Hassan</i>	
Modelling Neighbourhood Satisfaction of Residents in High-And Medium-Density Neighbourhoods of Lagos City, Nigeria	85
<i>Stephen Enyinnaya Eluwa and Ho Chin Siong</i>	
Student Activism and The 13th Malaysian General Election: The Second Civil Society Wave After 1969	105
<i>Mohd. Fauzi B Fadzil and Ku Hasnita Ku Samsu</i>	
Students' Islamic Personality on Amanah: A Structural Modelling Approach	129
<i>Tekke, M., Ismail, Nik Ahmad Hisham, Adnan, M.A.M. and Othman, N.</i>	



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